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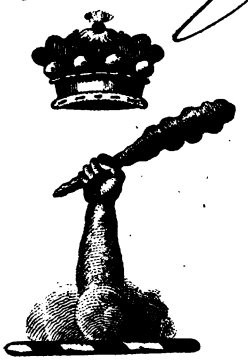

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SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER

AND

MISS CATHERINE TALBOT,

FROM THE YEAR 1741 TO 1770.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER TO MRS. VESEY,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1763 AND 1787;

PUBLISHED FROM THE

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE POSSESSION

OF THE

REV. MONTAGU PENNINGTON, M.A.

VICAR OF NORTHBOURN, IN KENT, HER NEPHEW AND EXECUTOR.

We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.

PSALM lv. Old Version.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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A

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. CARTER AND MISS TALBOT.

SERIES OF LETTERS

BETWEEN

MRS. ELIZABETH CARTER

AND

MISS CATHERINE TALBOT.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Piccadilly, *Jan.* 19, 1751.

I CAME here just to finish the old year at home; the last I shall ever finish in this old house, and the new one is now almost three weeks old before I have found time to write to you. In this time, and that too is now methinks a long while ago, we have had the pleasure of seeing your brother*; and I heartily wish any lucky chance would throw him in our way again, that we might see more of him, for we forgot to ask him where

* Her eldest brother, John Carter, Esq. of Deal.

he lodged. However, without the help of chance I hope we may find him out e'er it be long, for I take it for granted he may at least be heard of at your uncle's.

Well, but seriously now, can any body imagine why I have not written to you? Why honestly your *Rambler**, which is very pretty, has got into my considering drawer, from whence nothing ever comes out again under half a year, and might have the old Italian epitaph most melancholy writ over it,

> Stava bene
> Ma per star meglio
> Sto qui.

I have really and truly never been able to give it a second review, and was sillily ashamed to write to you till I had. I am grown a coxcomb, and spend more time than I should with my powder-box and pincushion. All the world is come to town, and visits must be made. Then, probably, either Lady Grey † or Lady Anson ‡, or somebody or other, that I am glad of any pretence to be with gets a cold; and then there is nothing to be heard of but work-bags, and tea-drinkings, and snug evening

* One of Mrs. Carter's Essays published in the *Rambler*, probably Number 100.

† Marchioness Grey, grand-daughter to the Duke of Kent.

‡ Daughter to the first Earl of Hardwicke, and wife to George Lord Anson.

parties.

parties. Next morning the sun shines, and who can help taking an airing; or the Carpenters are alone and want me, or somebody sends me a fine set of prints that must be looked over directly, or a book in print or manuscript that must be read and returned immediately or not at all—and so day after day flies away*, and the poor drawer lies just as it did.

But you must not lose your due praise. It was indeed exceedingly good of you to write that Paper *(in the Rambler)* and I thank you for it sincerely. And by the way the Bishop of Norwich †, who very particularly enquired after you, and sent you his compliments, desired me to engage you if possible, to enliven those Papers by throwing in something of your own, which he thought you better capable of doing than any body. I did not tell him how good you had been, because I did not know whether you would care I should. I was sorry the other day to see a Rambler (though a good one) upon Milton, because the author has been much censured for carrying his humanity and good-nature so much too far, as to assist that vil-

* So Horace lamented over the trifling engagements of a town life.—Perditur hæc inter misero lux, non sine votis. Sat. lib. ii. vi.

† Dr. Hayter, an amiable and learned prelate, afterwards Bishop of London.

lainous forger Lauder in his Apology. Have you seen any of that astonishing controversy? I write to night merely to tell you why I do not write, so adieu!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Feb.* 14, 1751.

It is not, dear Miss Talbot, for want of thinking that I have been this age in your debt, for I certainly have thought of it for several days with shame; but indolence and the head-ach have stifled all my convictions, and it was not till this present moment that I could prevail on myself to take up a pen in your service, or rather in my own, for I know no good you are likely to get by it; and it would probably have been as well if my said pen had laid quietly in its standish, or, to give it a more perfect quietus, had been conveyed to that same drawer of your's, where departed dullness slumbers in peace when you have pronounced the *novissima verba,* and *hic jace* secures its everlasting repose. I wish the foolish Letter had been lodged there, which I have been wasting my time to find a meaning

meaning to, and which has called me away from you; not but it is a very fine thing, decorated with all manner of hearts and scarifications of hearts, and sundry other witty and quaint devices, which seem rather too regular for the operations of a monkey. The form of writing seems to be a curious imitation of the ancient eggs and hatchets; as to the language, from the extreme difficulty of understanding any one word in it, I conjecture it to be the Cyprian. The author of this elaborate piece of mechanism is beyond my guessing. (After all, it will make a mighty clever fly-trap.) I have a much greater curiosity to find out the author of a book Mrs. Underdown has lately been reading to me, with which we are both greatly charmed. The title is "Directions for the Employment of Time." I do not know whether it may not be rather a foolish than a laudable curiosity that makes one so solicitous to find out the author of what one so greatly approves; at least the enquiry often ends in a grievous disappointment, when the author and the man appear to be such very different people. Have you seen Stanzas in a Country Church-yard? and do not you greatly admire them*? Lauder's affair is really very astonishing; surely the man must be out of his wits. I am sorry Mr. Johnson should have

* Gray's admired Elegy, which was first printed in 1750.

incurred

incurred any censure about this wretched business. I am told the Rambler will be continued no longer than to complete the year. Are you not rejoiced that your friend Mr. Jones *, whose poetry, notwithstanding all the charitable remonstrances of Mrs. Talbot, you used to draw out of a portmanteau by the ream for my study, is going to exhibit a Play?

I imagine my brother has before this given you some account of himself. I am going to lose all my children but Harry; they are all going to town, my sister into Devonshire-street †, and when she will return there is no conjecturing, for the people there are like papers in your considering drawer, unless they happen to be of that volatile unruly kind, that they make their escape, and choose rather to be fluttered about by the four winds of heaven, and be blown to the very verge of the Godwin Sands, than lie quietly and peaceably under any kind of lock and key.

Whether I may go soon for a week or two to Canterbury, or whether I may forbear, is a point at present in debate. Miss Lynch will shortly

* Probably Henry Jones, originally an Irish bricklayer, who was patronized by Lord Chesterfield. He published a volume of Poems, and "The Earl of Essex," a Play. See an account of him in Biog. Dict.

† Where her uncle Mr. Carter lived.

make

make her final exit from Kent, and to spend some time with her first seems to be her due. I have had a very pressing invitation from Miss Hall. But there are twenty little awkward circumstances which occasion twenty little awkward difficulties in this affair. But perhaps it may be right to get the better of them all, because it is not impossible but downright indolence may be the foundation of some of them, an enchantress who is mighty apt to implicate herself into all my deliberations, and often appears with such a solemn face of wisdom and argument that it is not very easy to find out the cheat.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Piccadilly, *Feb.* 29, 1751.

What shall I say, dear Miss Carter, about my considering drawer? I am downright ashamed of it, and most heartily beg, not your's, but Mr. Johnson's and all his readers' pardon, for suffering so many idlenesses to delay my returning you a piece deserving a much better fate. My excuse is nothing but mere *wicked racketing*, as you very

very justly call it; and wicked it really is, for nothing, I believe, so effectually corrupts the heart and depraves the understanding. The thing itself, *racketing*, is a bad thing, by which I mean, not only going to public places, not only consuming life in idle visits and dress, but merely the being out upon whatever succession of plausible pretences, perpetually out all day and every day. This is my case; I have not time to reflect upon a line I read, or consider a line I write, or indulge one remembrance of past times, or carry on one train of useful thought, so much am I taken up with the ordinary and due civilities of life. What can one do? I have not been at one public place; I have seen a card-table but twice; I never go either to bear-gardens or auctions; and yet my poor head is as giddy and as empty as if I whirled through the whole round of impertinence. Yet I cannot wish the number of people I love and esteem less, nor can I refuse to be with them while it is in my power; but glad shall I be when I get into the peace and freedom of the country.

I shall wish to hear of your going to Canterbury, but do not let any circumstance in it affect you more than the changes and varieties of this world ought to do, which, by the heightenings of a too fine imagination, may be made almost insupportable to a too sensible heart. I imagine Miss Lynch is going

ing to change her name, and heartily wish her all possible happiness.

We were quite unlucky in not seeing your brother. The Bishop is in residence at St. Paul's all this month, and dines with the Bishop of Durham every day; but my mother and self will be very happy to see him any day, and indeed wish very much for that pleasure. After this month he will be sure to find us all three and a plumb-pudding any Sunday at one o'clock.

Did I ever mention to you an Essay on Employment? We read it with much pleasure; the author, Dr. Bolton, Dean of Carlisle *, a very good man, much acquainted with my Lord Chancellor's family, from whence he has taken his Enilia, Leonora, and Scipio. I am glad, for your sake, you do not see Scipio as often as I do, for he is certainly very near the ideal Captain—not *my* ideal though—*My* ideal at this time should be some truly enterprizing hero, that would undertake to carry through an immediate reformation of this whole island, as the Theseus's and such pretty men did formerly. Indeed one is terrified at the growing profligacy of the age.

* He published this work in the preceding year, in 8vo. and it was at first ascribed to the pen of Mr. Gilbert West. Lord Hardwicke had the credit of patronizing this excellent man. See an account of him in Biog. Dictionary.

My

My acquaintance and intimacy, I thank God, lies among many good and excellent persons; but the general disregard of the world to all that is serious and important, the encreasing wickedness, extravagance, and cruelty of every week, makes one tremble for a guilty nation, lest its very being should soon be dissolved. Have you read Fielding's excellent, incomparable "Patriot," truly patriot book? or the Bishop of Worcester upon Gin? —Yet these things can be published, talked of, acknowledged to be just and well writ, and not wake one statesman out of his dream of ambition, or fashion, or amusement, into care of the real interests of the public. Not one heart seems to glow with the desire of extirpating villainy or preventing misery and pain. Very soon we shall be a nation of savages. I am the warmer just now, from a sad story of a poor honest creature, servant of our carrier, murdered last week, with the most terrible circumstances, by a parcel of wretches, whose vileness perhaps began in diversions and gin.

Let me change this painful subject, and talk to you of the tranquil little lady, Amable Grey*, just now become one of us, and Miss Carpenter, very soon to become Lady Egremont. I saw her last

* Now Baroness Lucas; eldest daughter of the Earl of Hardwicke, and Marchioness Grey.

night

night in high beauty; my lord was with her. I am assured he is most deserving, and know him to be a most agreeable man. Both families are delighted with the match, and the young people seem unfeignedly attached to each other. This cheerful scene has awakened Lady Carpenter, and restored her to herself.

I am just interrupted by my mother bringing me the shells your brother Harry so kindly sent me, the admiring which, the sight of the sea-weed we gathered with you below Dover Cliff, the recollection of those very pleasant days, has given me much to think of and much to say had I but time. Alas! how true your conclusion, how I feel its force! This dissipated life does indeed stifle every social affection and tender feeling. How much greater is the real pleasure of indulging one such reverie, of dwelling on one such friendly remembrance! But the puppet-show scenery shifts so often and so fast, one has not time to fix one's eye on any object.

There is an excellent woman, indeed greatly good, now dangerously ill, who ought to engage almost every thought and feeling of my heart, since her goodness to me has run parallel with my life. Lady Portland, who in her 79th year has all the vigour of mind and cheerfulness of temper of the gayest

gayest youth, and was well indeed in every respect, till seized with a fever last week, and I am at this moment in great suspense of hope and fear about her; yet you and your Rambler, (which has at last found its way out of my considering drawer, that its beauties may not be lost to the world through my fault) Miss Carpenter and her wedding cloaths, Lady Grey and her little girl, and fifty friends besides, divide my attention, and vary it with cheerfuller thoughts. Adieu! Do not fail to let me see the enclosed in print next week.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *March* 4, 1751.

You need not make any apologies about my Rambler. I had no idea when I sent it you that it was worth a second reading, and had literally so indifferent an opinion of it that I should not have sent it, only to convince you of my readiness to do what you desired. Having honestly told you my humility, I will now, with equal honesty, tell you my vanity, that upon the whole it pleases me better

better than Mr. Richardson's Rambler*. Do you like that Paper? and will you be angry with me for not liking it at all? I cannot see how some of his doctrines can be founded on any other supposition than that Providence designed one half of the human species for idiots and slaves. One would think the man was, in this respect, a Mahometan.

I can easily imagine how much you must be engaged in the hurry of London, and if you were condemned to spend the whole year in a constant round of company, your situation would be pitiable. But as six months of your time are spent in the quiet of studious retirement, surely the world, which stands so much in need of such examples as your's, has a very equitable claim to the rest. It appears inconceivable to me, that there can be any thing wicked in such a kind of racketing as your's. You say your acquaintance and intimacy lies among numbers of excellent people. I am persuaded they are so, and for that very reason cannot see why you should wish to be at a distance from them. Suppose these and all other excellent people were for running away from the world and one another, and each was to take to a separate cell, how must the party of virtue necessarily be weakened, and its influence contracted! Strong as

* Probably No. 97. Mrs. Carter's was No 100.

the

the power of vice and folly may be, it would become much stronger, and run greater lengths, if it was left unawed and unrestrained by the never-failing force of good examples; and the more of these, the more successful the opposition. The Theseus's and Hercules, and other *pretty fellows* of old, concerning whom you make such honorable mention, did not bring about their designs by spending their whole lives in rural retirement. Oh, but they were provided with a club, and such an argument as knocking on the head, no human depravity could pretend to resist! To be sure you are not furnished with any such formidable weapon as this, and if you were, I am inclined to think you would make but an awkward use of it; but there are certain less violent methods, that will never fail in some degree of producing their effect. The misfortune is, that people of superior excellence in understanding and virtue are apt too hastily to conclude, that their example is of no use to mankind, because they find that it is impossible to make all with whom they converse just as wise and good as themselves. I had begun something on this subject last summer by way of Rambler, which I would send you, but upon looking it over, find it not legible nor worth transcribing. I sent the Paper to Mr. Johnson, as you desired, and you see he has printed it, having made some omissions, which seem, in my opinion,

to have taken off both from the meaning and what spirit there was in it. The leaving out the names of *Peter and Paul* * seems to leave it in utter doubt, among people who do not greatly study them at least, what authors are meant.

Shall I send you any more Epictetus? or is it a puzzle to you till you get quietly into the country? I rejoice to hear of the happy prospects from Lady Egremont's match, and shall be heartily glad to congratulate you on Lady Portland's recovery. One is always unreasonable enough to think good people die too young, even at fourscore. Do not put yourself to any inconvenience, in the midst of all your bustles and engagements, to write me long Letters; for though I have few pleasures equal to the reading them, I cannot bear to think of adding to your incumbrances. Harry looks very magnificent about the honor you have done his shells, and has more at your service.

* In the last edition of Mrs. Carter's Works these are restored from her own Manuscript; and there does not seem to have been any good reason for the omission at first.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Piccadilly, *March* 16, 1751.

It can be no *inconvenience*, no *incumbrance* to me, dear Miss Carter, to write to you; and the longer the Letter the more I indulge myself. I will answer your's in order, and first for the *Mahometan* Mr. Richardson. Fie upon you! indeed I see no harm in that poor Paper, and must own myself very particularly fond of it. He does not pretend to give a scheme (not an entire scheme) of female education, only to say how when well educated they should behave, in opposition to the racketing life of the Ranelagh-education misses of these our days. Do read it over again a little candidly. How can you ever imagine that the author of Clarissa has not an idea high enough of what women may be, and ought to be? Have you seen the new edition? There are most incomparable additions to it. Asking this question reminds me that I never answered one of your's about Mr. Gray's country church-yard. It is indeed the most generally and the most justly admired that any little

poem

poem has been, since your owl flew out of her own ivy tower to perch upon his *.

All you say of the advantages of a mixt and busy, a sociable life I allow, two things only supposed (which alas! are not to be supposed in my case) that one is capable of doing good to others, and incapable of getting harm oneself. My very light mind is more apt to be utterly dissipated among trifles, than you I am persuaded can have any idea of. And by this time of year all my good country habits of diligence, recollection, and method, are so worn out, that I sit quite contentedly down in my little painted boat, and let it be carried along the stream of amusement without any degree of reluctance.

My acquaintance lies indeed among excellent people, but then they are so many of them that, to speak literally and truly, my little narrow mind has not room to hold them all at once, with all the variety of attentions and sentiments that belong peculiarly to every one. But you will say this very effort though seeming hopeless enlarges the narrow mind in some degree.—At this minute mine takes in none but painful images. Poor excellent Lady Portland! Various have been the turns of her ill-

* In allusion to the beginning of Mrs. Carter's "Ode to Wisdom."

ness. And alas! in all this time I have never seen her. How is it that people are in this world torn from one! one is near them perpetually—yet some invisible adamantine bar makes an eternal separation, and one has seen them for the last time, when one thinks of seeing them every day. Dear, honored, beloved Lady Portland!

I am, thank God, very well but very thin; nothing hurts me but a crowded Ridotto till four in the morning. People are in much anxiety about the poor Prince *, who was yesterday I fear in very great danger. The amiable Princess (who is very near her time) has not been out of his room, (where she has a couch to lie on) these three days. Adieu! I can talk of nothing but dismals.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *March* 24, 1751.

Well according to your advice I have given Mr. Richardson another reading, and confess

* Frederick Prince of Wales, father of his present Majesty. He died only four days after the date of this Letter.

myself

myself to have been too much prejudiced both by the opinions of those who read it before me, and from some of his own notions which I had lately seen on another subject, and that the Paper itself, if my head had not been full of these when I read it, might have appeared to much greater advantage.

I now long as much as you can do, for the time of your going to Cuddesden, for however gallantly you may go through the fatigues of a ridotto, I by no means can be reconciled to the account I hear from yourself and from my brother of your being grown so thin. If I was a manager in the house, the style of it should be altered forthwith. I hope your apprehensions about Lady Portland were too melancholy, as I find by other accounts all hopes are not yet given over. How I grieve for the amiable Princess, and her poor children! How far the nation is concerned in the Prince's death I am no judge, but the distress of his family must be real and sinks one's spirits.

Miss Lynch is now Mrs. Bargrave *, and has left Kent; I did not see her, perhaps it was as well. She was a good deal affected at parting with some

* Wife to Isaac Bargrave, Esq. then of Lincoln's Inn, and afterwards of Eastry Court, Kent. She was daughter to Dr. Lynch a physician of eminence at Canterbury, who was younger brother to the dean.

of her friends, and it is more than probable I might not have been so valiant as I thought myself. My father and sister Mary go to town next week, and my sister Peggy returns, so most of the family are in motion but myself, who remain quietly stuck here, like a shell fish to a rock. Adieu!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Piccadilly, *April* 9, 1751.

Did I tell you, dear Miss Carter, that I longed to go Cuddesden? So I did and so I do most sincerely, and yet I am glad our going is put off for a fortnight. Why? For a very bad reason, because let any appointed time come when it will, I am never ready for it; something or other unfinished, somebody I want to see more of. 'Tis this kind of something still to do that makes one live on so contentedly year after year, so don't let us quarrel with it, but yet that constant unsteadiness is a great fault of mine, and I will try to mend it if I can. Do not fancy I shall be a mere skeleton by the time appointed. I am sorry your brother saw me with such an evil eye, for I really am very

very well however smoke-dried, do pray entreat Captain Carter to call again that he may see how my looks are improved. The Bishop desires you will engage your father, &c. to dine with us on the 21st between one and two. If Miss Peggy has such a passion for the country as mine, I quite envy her the joy she must feel when first saluted by the view of Kentish violets and primroses. To say nothing of the *poor shell fish* who must make one rejoice to see whatever *rock* it is *stuck upon*. But how much rather would I hear of your being a bird with pretty painted wings, that might carry you swiftly from place to place wherever you have a friend, wherever you could delight or be delighted: had this been the case you would certainly have been with us yesterday ('tis now the 11th) not in the morning at St. Paul's *, where we were for four disagreeable hours surrounded with stuffs and papers; but in the afternoon at Hampstead where we dined with the Bishop of Durham, in a most enchanting gay pretty elegant house, that he has made there, and where I had an opportunity to make your compliments to the Bishop of Norwich.

You will think I am in the true taste of the town

* Where the deanery house was then fitting up for their reception.

resolved

resolved to banish all melancholy thoughts out of my head, since I have writ to you so far without naming any of those kind of subjects, of which this winter has afforded so many. The having plays and diversions renewed already, when the sad solemnity that methinks should "*Banish like a dream delight and joy*" is still unperformed, has something very shocking in it. I really imagine it proceeds from a principle of good-nature to actors, and dancers, and such other commonly called *poor devils;* but a false and mistaken kind of good-nature it is, and such a one as has a thousand fatal tendencies, and would sacrifice every propriety and decency of life to its own ideal excellencies. The true good-nature is such as Lady Portland's was. She is gone, and how many, and what a number feel her loss!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *April* 12, 1751.

Since like the other folks of this world you are not quite ready, why I am glad your journey to Cuddesden is put off for a fortnight, as I hope my father, brother, and sister, will be able to ac-

cept my Lord's kind invitation. Peggy came home last week, she is much obliged to you for your congratulations so far forth as they are well meant, but prefers the smoke of London to all the fragrance of Kentish violets and primroses, and had rather be waked by the hoarse calling of small coal, than the warbling of linnets, notwithstanding which she is very well pleased to come home again.

It is so long since I have disused the art of flying, that the fine painted wings you so kindly wish me might endanger my neck. I now seem entirely accommodated to a state of inactivity and repose, and grow on faster and faster to my rock, and it must be a violent effort that could draw me from it. And yet besides the particular inducement that there are some very valuable people in the world whom I must be strangely stupid not to wish sometimes to see, there are more general reasons that should make one chuse to mix a little now and then in the hurry of society, in order to keep up some kind of connexion with the universal community of mankind; to enlarge and vary one's ideas, and thus become more useful, and more agreeable to those with whom one is chiefly to converse, than it is possible to be in an absolute regular clock-work kind of life, where one is always moved by the same springs, and perpetually striking the same notes, and thus in time grow as tiresome to people as an

old

old tune. From such considerations I should think it right, perhaps, not to live year after year upon the same spot, and the same contracted circle of conversation, if it was in my power to do otherwise. But yet that it is not in my power gives me no uneasiness. A natural indolence, which was once checked and in some degree over-ruled by the conversation of the world, now that it is set free from all restraint, seems to have got the entire possession of me, and the way of life I am in, appears to be the very way in which I am most likely to be happy.

Nothing can be more just, or more properly applied, than what you say about false good-nature, for was real benevolence the motive of this compassion, surely some patriot hand would be exerted to stop the torrent of wickedness, and save a poor infatuated devoted nation, from vice and its never failing consequence, destruction. However these people, it is to be supposed, act from a principle of charity, conformable to their own sense of human wants, for many an able politician has, no doubt, a very sincere and affecting persuasion of the necessity of money, to the welfare of mankind, who never took it into his head that there ever was such a necessity in point of virtue.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *May* 10, 1751.

At last, dear Miss Carter, we are got into the country, on Thursday I hope my Lord will be able to join us, and then the joys of the country begin. At present we are only in a state of insipid tranquillity, for 'tis a strange kind of transition, from the hurry of London to absolute solitude. And when one looks back upon a long winter, which has been filled up with unavoidable trifles that left one at the time no leisure to reflect what they were, and to what use, the mind is presented with such a mere blank that it gives a mortifying view of the insignificance of human life. But this is not the true way of considering things, the feel of dissatisfaction is what we never ought to indulge, and thinking a little deeper sets all one's ideas right. The only consequence to be drawn from the imperfections and poornesses that experience will continually discover both in a sociable and a solitary life, is, that which ever is one's lot, each in its turn is equally good, and the other deserves not to be regretted, though it may be cheerfully welcomed when it comes in turn. It does not

please

please me (till I make some of these wise reflections on it) that such a mind as your's should be confined in so retired a scene; sometime or other you will, you must be in the world again, therefore don't indulge your indolence, but keep up the amusable and sociable spirit even while you wander solitary on the sea-shore. I don't love to hear you talk of that indolence, people that can write, read, and think like you, ought never to be indolent unless they are out of spirits, or unwell; and while the activity of the mind is kept up they are in readiness for every kind of scene. Changes of scene must be in this world, and therefore 'tis wrong not to suit one's way of thinking to them. I say this to myself as much as to you, for there is not the most trifling change in any object around me that I am not foolishly inclined to regret. You will believe then that it was not with perfect good spirits I took my last leave of the poor old house in Piccadilly, which I have been used to for these eighteen years. Some fond remembrances or other belonged to every room, to every inch in it; and with many a serious recollection, and many a grateful thought I used to go musing about it all the winter. And yet it has been a very gay sociable winter, for though I have been but at few public places, I have been much amongst my friends.

About this time twelvemonth we were happy in

that

that agreeable journey we took into Kent, and I cannot recollect the very pleasant time we spent there, without feeling a renewal of gratitude to every body that contributed to make it so, but most particularly so to you. I meant to have writ you a very long Letter, but the sun chuses to shine for the first time since we came here, and tempts me to walk.

I do not think we have ever writ to one another about the dispositions made with regard to the education of the young Royal family. Really we are strangely neglectful of the public good. However, considering we took no care about it, I think matters have upon the whole been pretty well ordered. I think you will be pleased with what I was told of the Bishop of Norwich's manner of addressing himself to this little Prince of Wales one of the first times he was with him. He asked him, whether if he was setting out on a journey he should like to gallop a very little way at first, and have all the rest rugged, intricate, and tedious, or to get over some few difficulties just at first, and gallop swiftly and smoothly all the rest of the way? —You see the application. The Prince was so pleased with his manner, that he told him, with honest politeness, he believed he could learn almost any thing of *him.* Every body is delighted with this charming boy, and speaks well of him in every

every respect. I fancy the King has not for many years felt such true happiness as he now enjoys, by having every laudable and tender affection of his heart called out towards the Princess and her sweet children. He behaves in a way that must make him beloved by all his subjects, and amiable and great in history. As much Epictetus as you please now.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 21, 1751.

I HOPE by this time you are perfectly happy, by the arrival of my Lord and fine weather. But really and truly just now I have a most violent disinclination to writing, being harrassed almost to death with various disputes and turmoils, that have much disturbed the peace of this otherwise agreeable society. How difficult is it for a temper weak and untoward as mine is, to conduct itself with innocence! when one is affected in so many various ways, the safest method seems to be absolute silence. This too has its inconveniences, and yet to talk is, without the utmost caution, to do wrong. And now probably you may think with all these vexations

vexations I am tolerably prepared to receive your lessons, and to look with great composure on any change. But still disagreeable as some circumstances in my present situation are, it is unreasonable to complain, for in general there are more advantages in our present state, than upon a calm consideration can be foreseen in any other. And although I know you will be angry with me, I cannot for my life help telling you, that ever since I have been made unhappy by these commotions, it has been a great subject of consolation to me, that I never was tempted by any voluntary connexion to engage myself in the interests, passions, and tumults of the world. If I have suffered from the troubles of others, who have more sense, more understanding, and more virtues than I might reasonably have expected to find, what might I not have suffered from a husband! Perhaps be needlessly thwarted and contradicted in every innocent enjoyment of life: involved in all his schemes right or wrong, and perhaps not allowed the liberty of even silently seeming to disapprove them! It is true indeed the righteous laws of heaven are all consistent, nor is any human creature placed in a situation in which it is not possible to be wise and good, but if one state appears more liable to danger and uneasiness than another, why should people expose themselves to voluntary difficulties?

I am

I am much obliged to you for relating to me the Bishop of Norwich's Address to our Prince, it has really given me great pleasure. It was not for want of public spirit that I neglected to consult with you what was to be done for the good of the nation, and the young Royal family, whom I have had greatly at heart, and had formed a scheme for their education, in which I was so happy that I felt quite disappointed that it did not take effect, and determined to have nothing more to do in the affair, than sincerely to wish the method that is fixed on may prove a happy one. The behaviour of the King is truly noble and good.

I send you a deal of Epictetus, and have more ready for you; has my Lord heard any thing of the translation said to be going on in Edinburgh? I long for you to see Epictetus in a better dress, he will appear to more advantage than in my vile disguise. You must allow me to put you in mind of a promise you was so good as to make me when I had the happiness of seeing you last year.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *June* 8, 1751.

ALAS! dear Miss Carter, I have long intended to write to you, and am ashamed; but the Bishop of Gloucester is here, and the Bishop of Oxford is an idle man, and has not read over your Epictetus, but notwithstanding all these difficulties I am determined to write to you to day.

I am grieved for you more than I can express, and wish you was at Canterbury or any where from the tents of Kedar *, where to speak of peace is a signal for battle. As for your arguments against marrying, I do not allow their force. That every state of life has its restraints, its cares, and difficulties, should, I think, make one look upon them all with a more equal and indifferent eye than one is apt to do; and being fully convinced that nothing is perfect on this side eternity, be ready to determine with ease and composure upon whatever choice seems to have the fairest probability, nor be frightened at any change, since every change is but from one kind of good and evil that one has been used to, to a new mixture of the same ingredients

* See Psalm CXX. 5.

which

which the dispensing hand of Providence, either holding or merely pointing it out to our choice, knows to be at the same time more wholesome for us than the former. I fancy many over delicacies and unhappy prepossessions arise from one's having taken up a notion, that we must never change, but for somewhat absolutely and completely good; that this perfection may possibly by some few happy people be found, cannot be denied. While we converse with human creatures, something must be past over in every temper: therefore I have no idea of its being more dreadful (supposing a character in the main good and deserving) to have some few faults and errors to pass over in a voluntarily chosen object of duty than in any other. Some restraints we must bear, 'tis the condition of our nature, and the law of society; and when we know what it is our duty to prefer, and what to resign, the task is not so hard as fancy forms it. All I mean to say is, that a match need not be miserable if in some few slight circumstances we are obliged to check our own inclinations, and in material important matters no good man will lay any harsh restraint on the person to whom he is connected by solemn vows. There may be here and there an exception, but one must judge upon general probabilities, not particular cases. I am afraid you will think I am writing most wicked hard hearted

hearted nonsense; if you are angry with me scold me, though if you knew what I feel for you, you would not have the heart.

Which is most to be pitied now I wonder, the Bishop of Oxford in the midst of London smoke during this fine weather, or us for being even in this charming place and season without him? I am afraid neither of us can represent it as a very compassionate case. The Bishop of Gloucester leaves us on Saturday, and then we shall be in absolute solitude till my Lord comes, and I begin to have less regard for solitude than I used to have in theory, as I do not find I can improve it so as to do or think any thing that is worth doing or thinking. It is at the worst a pleasant state of idleness and indolence when one has fair fields to range in, sweet fresh air to breathe, and books of one sort or other to read when one is weary of walking about.

Do you not think the Rambler is grown very agreeable this summer? There is a paper called "The Idler*," that I cannot commend on the whole, and yet it so far amuses me that I am glad to take it in rather than any other. This is the literary gazette, who takes up every one of those

* This could not have been Dr. Johnson's "Idler," which was not published till the year 1758.

subjects that we wished the Rambler to mention. The bakers' club, the public diversions — every thing that relates to the present times and daily occurrences. Some few of the papers lately have been very pretty. One lately has justly made people extremely angry, as he published a much too particular and personal essay on occasion of the dreadful sad story of poor poor Mr. Dalton*. What a heart breaking story is that; I know all the family—excellent people, and the poor young man every way amiable and deserving. The young lady too perfectly blameless, much commended, and so affected with this fatal stroke, that her life was for some days despaired of. She has a large fortune, and had refused several advantageous offers, he being the only man she could love.—Poor soul! he had that very morning been expressing to a friend the grateful sense he had of his happy situation and fair opening prospects. The Bishop of G. spent a day with the poor father in his way here. He is an old friend of his. He found him surrounded with every comfort so sad a case allows, the support of a truly religious mind, a very amiable, prudent, and sweet-tempered wife, and five fine children still remaining. He is a very

* He was killed in a duel, but the Editor is ignorant of the particular circumstances alluded to.

good

good man, and his sufferings have been inexpressible. He heard the shocking news without any previous preparation, yet he would not let his affliction prevent him from going to church, and receiving the sacrament as usual on Whit-Sunday.

I have at last enclosed you the bit of hair, which certainly was not worth asking for twice; indeed I intended to have sent an essay along with it. A good protestant essay against relicks, especially those of the living; and afterwards I intended, in the spirit of popery, to have put this trash into a crystal case for you, that there might be something at least of value in the present. But enquiring the price of the cheapest fashionable heart (and alas? *fashiouable hearts* are of mighty little value) the spirit of covetousness persuaded me that it was a sin to buy trinkets when so many poor children wanted gingerbread; so enfin, in the spirit of industry, I have darned it all over with red and blue silk; and though not in the form of a heart, yet I desire to send with it my sincerest love and thanks to you for the value you are pleased to set on it for my sake.

The Bishop of Oxford has made all possible enquiry by Miller, and can hear no tidings of a Scotch Epictetus, so I hope there is none. Are there not in this last parcel some vile stoical doctrines about murder? Pray try some time if it

would not look clearer to write the dialogue part — dialogue wise — just for all the world like a play-book. One should easier distinguish the speaker than by dashes.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TABOT.

Deal, *June* 25, 1751.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, dear Miss Talbot, for the lock of hair, which certainly needed not the decoration of gold and crystal to heighten my estimation of its worth. The essay too was equally unnecessary; for if it at all tended to lessen my esteem, or in any degree to alter my opinion of the person for whose sake this lock is so invaluable, I do assure you it would do me no manner of good. This is a point on which I am quite hardened, so you may e'en keep your essays for more tractable people; lovers, for instance, who, after the first fit of raving, usually grow very tractable and reasonable, and are mighty well disposed to receive any such salutary anti-popish admonitions. In some degree, however, to quiet your conscience, I assure you I do not intend to apply it as a charm for the ague or the tooth-ach; and that notwithstanding,

standing all my fondness for it, I shall continue a firm and good protestant. But I must be allowed to look on it with delight, as the gift of a person to whom I owe the highest obligation, that of having endeavoured to render me wiser and better; and I think you will be satisfied that the sentiments arising from such a reflection cannot do mischief. After all, admitting this kind of memento to be a folly (and 'tis certain that to the people who pay them the greatest regard they are usually the least necessary) it is at least an innocent one. And is it not possible to carry the opposition to such harmless trifles to rather too great a degree of severity for the condition of ordinary mortals, who must have their bagatelles and their playthings, which are entitled to toleration, merely as they are innocent; and where they seem in any degree to have a mixture of something laudable and good, have a claim even to encouragement. And thus, after the example of Mrs. Centlivre, of expeditious memory, who wrote against a book before the author had begun it, I have answered your essay.

I am sorry I cannot tell you my situation, for which you so kindly compassionate me, is mended, but the life I lead does not leave me much time for uneasy reflections. The whole morning, from seven till one, is spent with my children, and my afternoons are spent in visiting or walking. There

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are indeed some subjects that will intrude and cast a gloom over the finest prospects, and sadden the most lively conversations, but I do all I can to be easy and cheerful.

I was much affected by your account of the late most shocking duel. I believe you would have been pleased with an observation of Harry's, who said, that though the survivor had escaped, to be sure he must be miserable, and like Orestes; and then he repeated the line in Virgil,

——— Scelerum furiis agitatus Orestes.

I have sent you more Epictetus, and will for the future write the dialogue "just for all the world like a play-book;" but at present you must be contented with it just for all the world like a history. I wonder you are not tired of reading such a strange, wooden, blundering translation.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *July* 15, 1751.

How can I employ my morning better than in writing to dear Miss Carter; 'tis true I have

have many Letters of older date to answer, but that *flateur* disposition of her's towards me, for which I have so often chid her, shall give her the preference to-day; as, having a better opinion of her honesty than her judgment, I do really believe she thinks sincerely all the too fine things she says to me. *You the wiser and better for me!* If it be so, you have certainly very good luck.

At present I am trying to be the better and the wiser, as far as I can, for the leisure of the country; though with riding, visiting, and visitors, it is not very great; and likely, alas! to be very short, as the Bishop's residence will call him again to St. Paul's before October. We may perhaps come down again for a month or two in the winter, but these are distant schemes, and I am extremely disposed with regard to such temporary arrangements to live *au jour la journée*, and trouble my head no farther.

I must not part with your answer to my unwritten essay, without making a sincere acknowledgement of the truth of what you observe in it, that people may carry their disregard to trifling indulgencies of friendly affection a great deal too far, and that the total want of these dispositions (whether naturally wanting, or unnaturally rooted up) is a great defect. I hope this is not my case, yet I am sensible I have gone too far, merely from the idea

idea of not spending time uselessly or idly. Would you believe that I have scarce any value for the pictures of those whom I most sincerely love, and whose presence would be the greatest joy to me. What prescription would you give me for the cure of such an anti-romantic folly? 'Tis absolute puritanism.

I have lately got the advantage of an excellent master in the art of flower-painting, the head gardener of the physic-garden. Gardening is another of my delights; and I can amuse myself with projects for improving a quarter of an acre as much as if his Majesty had given me the care of Kensington Gardens. Our little spot has been so gay with flowers, it was enough to inspire one with good humour to look into it.

Your brother's observation ought to be a just one, and flows from a good heart; but whether the Orestes he pities is not too fine a gentleman, and too much a man of honour, to feel what the Grecian Orestes did, I know not. The poor young lady, I am told, is still in a pitiable way. I am fallen much in love with Plutarch's Morals, a little of which my lord reads us now and then out of a very so so translation. They seem to me the most amiable, the most lively, and the least dry of any moral book, but 'tis indeed very little I have heard of them. I am deep in the Memoires du Duc de Sully,

Sully, and exceedingly entertained with them. I make him my companion with pleasure, as he seems to have an honest, brave, and worthy heart. 'Tis delightful with such a guide to trace the windings of the human heart, the turns and varieties of human affairs, through a series of remarkable years, and to agree with him in preferring the wisdom of plain and steady uprightness to the low intricacies of interested, base, and dissembling politics. I am reading many other books, but will not trouble you with my thoughts of them till I have read them through. I do not want, like the news-writers, to fill up my Paper with retractions. There is one article I have often inserted at the end of it, which I must put in again to-day, since you may depend upon it as much and more than if it was from the Gazette, that I am, &c.

Have you read the Oxford and Cambridge Verses *?

* Upon the Death of Frederick Prince of Wales.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 12, 1751.

What kind of entertainment can you hope for, dear Miss Talbot, in a Letter dated from these regions of discord, where the sun rises and sets in a quarrel, and where the still gloom of the night is haunted and disturbed by the spectres of contention?—Mighty poetical all this to be sure, but in more serious prose, we are in a mighty commotion*. How vain are the fairest prospects and most flattering schemes of human happiness! To this limit of the habitable earth I fled for repose, for the sober pleasures of studious ease, and the cheerful unembarrassed indulgence of friendly social affections; and now, by a strange concurrence of events, I am hurried into the midst of tumult and uproar, and all those social affections are embittered and disconcerted.

Where I can next fly I know not, unless I betake myself to the hollow of some rock, and, in

* This Letter alludes to some unfortunate disagreements in the town of Deal, in which some of Mr. Carter's family and friends were under the necessity of taking a part.

the

the spirit of quietness, enter into an acquaintance with the fishes; for fishes, good creatures, are mute, and I have for some time conceived such honourable and affectionate notions of them upon this account, that I am determined (do not attempt to dissuade me, for I am quite determined) if ever I keep a lap-dog or a monkey, it shall be a fish.

It is impossible to describe to you the various vexations by which I am surrounded, which hurry me away, like other insignificant straws and feathers, by the torrent of confusion that bears down all before it. I endeavour to keep my thoughts fixed to the present moment, and wholly give up the future to that "time and chance which happens to all," or rather to the disposal of that gracious Providence which often by unexpected methods calms the tumult of human passions. At all events, such scenes as those of which I have been for some time an uneasy spectator, may furnish one, if properly applied, with many an instructive lesson. A view of the errors on both sides is a surer guide than the very best formal treatise of morality, as pictures are generally more striking than descriptions.

While I am thus driven about by the storms of contention, I rejoice to consider you as fixed in the *palace of calm delights*. I am somewhat disappointed that the sea-poppies have not made their appearance

appearance at Cuddesden. I have met with a vast profussion of them these last two months in my walks to Kingsdown *, which I looked at with the greatest delight, from a thought that perhaps you might at the same moment be admiring some of the same family in your garden. My sister is, I thank God, surprizingly better by the sea and the air of Kingsdown, and is in no kind of danger from a racketing life, for the good folks of Kingsdown are as far removed from the fashionable gaieties of this world, and indeed from most of the business of it, as if they belonged to another planet. They had not even heard (happy people!) that the Clerk of Deal Chapel was dead. It was some time before my sister could understand their language; however, she soon became a very considerable personage among them, and is at present the Deborah of of the village, and the greatest deference is paid to her judgment. The master of the house where she lodges enjoins his wife to mind what *Madam* says, for that for a *feamale* he never heard one talk like her. It has even been hinted to her by the clerk of the neighbouring parish, that he wishes she would undertake to talk to the parson, a grievous pro-

* A very small and retired fishing village on the sea-shore, about three miles from Deal, Mrs. Carter's next sister (afterwards Mrs. Pennington) was there at this time, in ill health, for change of air.

fligate

fligate poor wretch as ever brought dishonour upon his function. I was much entertained with a discourse she had with an old fellow, whom she endeavoured to dissuade from a wicked practice of encouraging people to fall together by the ears; but he assured her he had found out by long experience, that the only way to reconcile folks was to set them a fighting. If so, I wish she had exhorted him to come and practise his salutary art at Deal.

Do not be under any kind of solicitude about me, for my fits of impatience and discontent are but short, and I meet with a thousand things to divert them; and notwithstanding some awkwardnesses, I have many cheerful hours of agreeable society. I have not seen the Oxford and Cambridge Verses. The only late publication I have met with is Mr. Smart's Prize Verses. The kind of reading I have most wished to see lately has been a subpœna to summons me out of this uproar; but here I am, and here I heartily wish to remain, and am here and every where your's.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Aug.* 16, 1751.

I have never heard from you since June, dear Miss Carter, and have been uneasy about you for some time. Do let me hear from you very soon, as I am full of apprehensions that this wet summer has disagreed with you or some of your family. As for us, we are, thank God, all very well.

Our present after-supper author is Mr. Pope, in Mr. Warburton's edition. Is it because one's strongest partialities, when in any point deceived, turn to the strongest prejudice of dislike, that I read those admirable poems and letters with a considerable mixture of pain and indignation? At some uncharitable moments one can scarce help looking upon all those eloquent expressions of benevolence and affection as too much parade, while one sees them overbalanced by such bitterness and cutting severity. I wish I knew the true history of Patty *.

* Mrs. Martha Blount, to whom Pope left great part of his fortune. A more just piece of criticism both upon the author and his commentator has not often occurred, or been conveyed in fewer words.

Till

Till I do I cannot read the Letters of friendship to her father with any satisfaction. I am afraid you will be angry with me for all this, but while every reading makes me more admire his genius, every one makes me more doubt his heart. One thing I am extremely offended at in his poems, and of which I never took so much notice before, his frequent quotations of Scripture phrases in much too ludicrous a way. The notes are worth any body running over; some very wild, some very ingenious, some full of amusing anecdotes, some bitterly but not wittily satrical, but merely rough, unjust, and angry, and the greatest number, true commentator like, explaining what needs no explanation, and wire-drawing for meanings that the author never thought of.

I am still bewitched by the "Memoires de Sully." I wish you may meet with it, for it is extremely worth reading. I know none that shews one the world in a more entertaining and instructive way, and numberless are the reflections that every page suggests to me. You shall have a longer Letter next time, but the five minutes you would employ in reading another sheet from me, do employ them better in writing me a few lines to say you are well.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 20, 1751.

YOUR very obliging enquiry, dear Miss Talbot, makes me almost ashamed of not having been sick, for perhaps you will think it a strange excuse for my not writing, my having been very well. But the very unusual degree of health I have been blessed with this year has made me ramble about so much that I have had no time for writing. I heartily rejoice to have so good an account of you all at Cuddesden, and hope it may long continue.

I have not seen Mr. Warburton's edition of Mr. Pope's Works, and it is charitable in you to give me some account of the fashionable books. I will not quarrel with you for your doubts about Mr. Pope's character, which seems to have been a mixed one; but I cannot help thinking, that those strong expressions of benevolence and affection, where he did express them, were sincere. In some cases he deceived himself probably, and imagined the too cutting severity with which he attacked some characters a laudable zeal against vice and folly, which

which often proceeded perhaps merely from the irritations of constant bad health. It is less difficult, perhaps, to excuse his satires than his panegyrics; and indeed, when one compares the magnificent declamations which he and many other authors make about virtue, with the encomiums they bestow on the most worthless and even profligate of the human race, one is absolutely at a loss to know what they mean by a man of virtue *, unless it be one who has never been hanged. Upon the whole, however, I am inclined to be much more partial to Mr. Pope than his commentator, whose arrogance and ill-nature are beyond mortal sufferance, and still more disgusting by a heavy awkward affectation of wit. I do not imagine by your account of his notes they would greatly contribute to reconcile me to him. If ever the Duc de Sully falls in my way I shall be too much prejudiced by your good opinion of him not to read his Memoirs. You tell me nothing of Mrs. Cockburn. I have read but little yet, but she seems to have had a most remarkable clear understanding and an excellent heart. By what I have read of her prose, I should by no

* With Pope and his junto, all the virtues, like all the wit and talents, were entirely confined to their own friends; so that in their works the words have really no meaning.

means suspect she had a genius formed for poetry, which is perhaps one reason why I have not yet looked into her play.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Caddesden, *Sept.* 27, 1751.

At last, dear Miss Carter, I have secured a quiet half hour to write to you. I cannot imagine how one contrives to have so little time in the country, but it really is fact; and 'tis mortifying enough to sit down and consider seriously in what trifles the greatest part of life is spent. You know it is one of my infirmities to complain of this, and to take it too much to heart. Perhaps many useful inferences might be drawn from this mortifying consideration, and many comfortable ones. This human mind, so formed for unbounded improvements and delights, must be forced to look much beyond the present scheme for objects and employments suited to its faculties. Our very best affections here—how confined, how circumscribed by a thousand petty considerations! our noblest faculties,

faculties, how tied down to petty attentions! and our invaluable hours, how wasted (as one is ready to think) upon matters of no importance, no improvement in themselves, though of the greatest when submitted to as making up the daily round of duty, the proper though low exercises of our present state. Your employments are indeed of a much higher class than mine. You are giving excellent instructions, and forming minds that are naturally good and ingenious, and at your leisure minutes you can transmit to your learned friends the admirable sentiments of Epictetus; but happy as my life is, it is really most vexatiously insignificant, though I should indeed be perfectly contented if I was sure I did not make it more so than there is any need. I read little, write less, and think least of all to any purpose; working and flower-painting come in only by the by; riding and walking take up many hours, but they are absolutely necessary to my health.

We have the unexpected happiness of staying on in this place, which we all love, a fortnight longer, though it has been bought with some vexatious uncertainties; no happiness is to be had for absolute nothing. My lord's residence begins the first of October, but to my infinite joy the house at St. Paul's, which has been in an absolute state of cosmeticks from top to toe, is declared to be unsafe,

and unready for us as yet. We hope to be there on the 11th, till when we shall enjoy the clear air and golden sunshine here; and there is a perverseness in human nature that makes one know the full value of any enjoyment best on the point of parting with it.

I could talk to you a great deal about Mr. Pope, for our evening readings have filled me with meditations about him, but they are what neither you nor I like, and besides would make half a volume. Oh, poor imperfect human nature! How should *ever dust and ashes be proud,* when there is not a genius ever so brightly robed in wit and learning that is not deeply soiled with them? But the all-bright unsullied robe will be put on hereafter, and in the mean time we have nothing to do with any spots but our own. I love Mrs. Cockburn dearly for her zeal in defending him. She seems to have had an honest, upright, affectionate heart, that I honour. What a pity that her last years were in a manner lost in obscurity so little suited to her genius. But

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The deep unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desart air."

And these human gems shall all hereafter be united, and admired in one glorious blaze.—These flowers

flowers that grew and faded separate here, shall all be bound up in one garland, and mingle their kindred sweets *.

Some of her letters have given me infinite amusement. I can trace in them a whole little romance, a blameless coquetry (that did not, however, I believe, pass without censure from the world), a fair-dealing kind of affectionatenesss, ready to encourage and acknowledge its liking of all amiable people, which yet squares too little with the decorums of the world, and the restraints of necessary prudence, to have made the owner of it happy here. *Oh this nasty worky-day world!* All this nonsense I write in answer to your question.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 21, 1751.

As I think an auction nothing more than a place to furnish people with imaginary wants, in the spirit of prudence I chuse to let my scholars go there by themselves, and gladly seize the time to

* What a noble application of Gray's elegant metaphor, and to how much more sublime a subject than the original?

thank

thank you for your Letter, which was, however, so long in coming that I began to be uneasy. I too deeply feel the subject of your complaint of the want of time, and surely I must feel it in a greater degree than you, who are so scrupulously cautious (may I not venture to say, in some instances so superstitiously cautious) not to misemploy the least moment. Only think of the picture! If you talk of the insignificancy of your life, what is to be said of such a wretched trifler as I am? Sometimes indeed I have the grace to be ashamed, and really think I am living to no kind of purpose; at others I look round the world, and see most folks in it as foolishly busied, and take comfort. This, however, is a species of comfort so dangerous, and wants so many qualifications and restrictions, that one may almost as well be without it. At one time I think it must proceed from a voluntary dilatoriness that I do so little, at another the whole fault is thrown upon some natural defect, some unavoidable slowness of constitution. At last, tired with all these various conjectures and speculations, and not pleased nor perfectly satisfied with any of them, I make the shirts I have to make, hear the lessons I have to hear, and upon the whole, go on in the same daily track tolerably well contented. If it be considered that with these petty employments, these idle amusements, which in some views we are apt to look upon as so trifling and insignificant, and below the dignity of our na-

ture, are necessarily interwoven innumerable occasions for the improvement of it; that in the most ordinary occurrences of conversation there is always some irregularity of temper to be corrected, some impropriety of behaviour to be avoided, some good disposition to be called forth, we shall find no reason to treat the daily exercises of life as low and contemptible, even where there are no opportunities from great and distinguished talents, and advantages, of rising to any remarkable degrees of excellence.

You were very good to let me know you were all so well in health. May that and every other blessing attend you in your new habitation, where I imagine you are by this time settled. I have grieved for you that the additional fortnight at Cuddesden could give you little other joy of being in the country, than the knowledge that you were not in London. The excessive rains have for some time crampt even such a genius as me at bad weather, and confined my rambles to the limits of my own town. Luckily Harry and I returned from Canterbury the day before it began, where we had spent a fortnight with Mrs. Hall, or we must have condescended, like other inferior travellers, to have been stuffed into a coach, instead of enjoying the last fair autumnal prospects in a very pleasant walk. With all our spirit, we submitted, however,

to

to some rules of prudence, and took two days for this expedition.

How should you understand coquetry better than I? and to be sure you do, for I was quite in a wood in reading some of Mrs. Cockburn's Letters. But you may remember my stupidity about a certain Ode, which without your assistance I should never have been able to understand. I would fain have the advantage of you in something. Pray can you knit? I have just taken it into my head to learn, I have taken incredible pains, and observed as profound a silence as if I had entered myself a disciple in the school of Pythagoras, to the great offence of Mrs. Underdown, who insists that knitters are as bad company as smoakers; and observing that I grew somewhat vain on my proficiency in finishing a round in somewhat less than an hour, has endeavoured to mortify my vanity by telling me, that notwithstanding all my efforts, I am blundering at an art in which I shall be excelled by every goody, and every dirty-faced girl in the parish.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Wrest, *Oct.* 24, 1751.

Once in my life, dear Miss Carter, you shall hear me acknowledge that I have leisure in abundance, and I seize the opportunity of telling you so, instead of waiting five days till I get to London. I am here in an enchanted Castle, with no one earthly thing to do, no one interruption of business, real or pretended, not so much as a call for the toilette of more than five minutes, an absolute unquestioned liberty. The most delightful groves to wander in all day, and a library that will carry one as far as ever one chuses to travel in an evening. I am here with Lady Grey, Mr. Yorke, and ——; could you guess the fourth you would envy me! With this fourth too I came down almost tête-a-tête, only Jane for a Chaperon; and really for people who do not feel the danger of being talked into a consumption, he is an entertaining and instructive companion, as well as a good sort of man.

Your excellent letter found me here, after having amused my lord and my mother in town. What you say about employment and improvement seems perfectly

perfectly just, and I will try to think as you do whenever I am engaged unavoidably in what is trifling or insignificant; farther than this, we shall neither of us be inclined to go, but try to make every minute turn to the best account we can—and whether that be in knitting stockings, painting violets, or ruling kingdoms, what does it signify when the minute is over? I am sick of all human greatness and activity, and so would you be if you had been turning over with me five great folios of Montfaucon's French Antiquities, where warriors, tyrants, queens, and favourites, have past before my eyes in a quick succession, of whose pomp, power, and bustle, nothing now remains but quiet Gothic monuments, vile prints, and the records of still viler actions. Here and there shines out a character remarkably good or great, but in general I have been forced to take refuge from the absolute detestation of human nature that was coming upon me, in the hope that the unillustrious in every age, the knitters, the triflers, the domestic folks, had quietly kept all that goodness and happiness among themselves, of which history preserves so few traces.

Whether I shall have much or little time at St. Paul's I cannot yet guess; I fancy more than in Piccadilly. The house is made very comfortable, and the situation seems to agree with all the family very

very well. How sincerely do I wish that you was situated again for a few months in Bishopsgate-street.

Let me do justice to human nature and French history; my last night's reading afforded some instances of most charming generosity, next to Roman, and of real goodness.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT,

Deal, *Nov.* 2, 1751.

I HEARTILY congratulate you, dear Miss Talbot, on the novelty of abundance of leisure, and myself on your indulgence in bestowing part of it on me. I truly felt the pleasure your good-nature intended me, and could not help exulting a little in the consciousness of having deserved it, as the first joy that struck me was in seeing your Letter franked by Mr. Yorke. And so, poor souls, you were harassed for forty miles by "a throat of brass and adamantine lungs." You had no other chance to escape this persecution but a danger of the coach being overturned, the only situation in which I ever remember the hero in question to have been

been silent, and then for four hours he never spoke a word, and he quietly composed himself to sleep. Seriously however I agree with you in all you say to his advantage, and wish him well settled in the world, if he chuses it, with some good kind of a deaf and dumb gentlewoman.

There is indeed no other refuge from the horrors of history but in the mild majesty of private life. And yet how far this may be a reasonable consolation is not absolutely clear, and it is better perhaps to stop at the first view of things as they are, than to suffer one's thoughts to expatiate on what they might be. One use, however, one ought to derive from the comparison of exalted and humble life, a deep gratitude for the advantage of being placed in that situation which affords the fewest opportunities to the extravagance of human passions.

My father has at length been prevailed upon to try Bath, and set out last Friday; he is to stay but a few days in town, but designs, if possible, to pay his respects to the Bishop of Oxford and the ladies. God send he may return to us the better for his journey. Miss Hall is gone to Bath with the Oxenden family, which I hope will do her more good than her journey to Tunbridge did last year.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

St. Paul's Deanery, *Nov.* 26, 1751.

I HAVE been shamefully careless, and left myself only time to tell you that I have this minute sent your Epictetus by the Deal coach which sets out to-morrow. As it goes in a box I would have stuffed it up with ribbons, if all the world was not in mourning, but I hope we shall be soon out. The accounts of the Duke are, God be thanked, much better to-day. Lady Grey's little girl has got the small-pox, not the best sort, but it is turned, and she is doing very well.

Adieu! this does not go for a Letter, but answer it by a line, that I may know you have received your Epictetus, for I am in a sad panic about it.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 30, 1751.

EPICTETUS and all his company arrived safely at Deal last night, I beg you will make my most

most grateful thanks to his lordship for his great kindness about it. I am more obliged to you for the dear little scraps of writing *par ci par la*, than if the parcel had been stuffed with all the ribbands and flappets, that ever gladdened the heart of vanity. There needed no manner of apology for not sending me the two play houses, as I am credibly informed we have an excellent set of actors coming to Deal, who want very few qualifications, but washing their faces and learning to read. And as to St. Paul's choir we have such very fine psalm-singing here at present, that we would hardly condescend to listen to any music but our own. But as little need as I have of the other articles which you kindly thought of putting up in the parcel, there is one, which it must be confessed I can find nothing that will tolerably supply the place of; so pray let it be put up and sent carefully by the next post, and I will leave a whole company of psalmodists to unpack you, which is saying a bold word, considering how much psalm-singing is the study of men, women, and children, in this place; and in how very ill a light all people are looked on who on any occasion omit coming to school. The whole race of Strephons and Cupids, and roses, and lilies, are banished from all our polite assemblies, and no lady tunes her voice to any thing but sol fa.

I am

I am very glad to find by the Paper that the Duke is better, and that little Lady Grey is quite well.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

St. Paul's Deanery, *Dec.* 23, 1751.

I MAKE no excuses, dear Miss Carter, for being so uncertain a Correspondent; my own heart tells me I would write oftener if I could, but every day brings its own business, which cannot be deferred till the next, and thus time is run away with. I do not recollect having ever spent a pleasanter winter than this has hitherto been, we see in general more of our friends than we did when we lived nearer, for fixed days and appointed times are now necessary. One day spent at a place is worth fifty thousand of *indeed I can't stay* calls and visits. Then when the fine folks do set about coming up hither in an afternoon, they so much over reckon the immense distance, that by means of dining by sun rise they are with us an hour earlier than it would have been possible, had we been among them

to

to have rung for their tea. And then we are all so glad and so obliged at one anothers visits. You cannot imagine how many curtesies my mother made on Sunday night to an almost next door neighbour at St. James's, that in those days we never put ourselves in any sort of hurry to visit.

Sunday evening is the day allotted for us to be at home, that fine ladies may not be interrupted by drays and waggons, or hindered going to drums and plays. I like it very well, for owing to the early church hours here, Sunday is a very leisure day, and two or three hours miscellaneous conversation does not do amiss. I only wish for you in our neighbourhood. Miss Highmore told Mr. Edwards she had some hopes of seeing you in town this winter.

O se ciò fosse vero! O se Io lo credesse!

Do you know the Grandison family? If you do not you will to your cost. Oh! Miss Carter, did you ever call Pigmalion a fool, for making an image and falling in love with it—and do you know that you and I are two Pigmalionesses? Did not Mr. Richardson ask us for some traits of his good man's character? And did not we give him some? And has not he gone and put these and his own charming ideas into a book and formed a Sir Charles

Charles Grandison*? And though all the rising generation should copy after him, what good will that do poor us, who must sigh and pine till they are educated. You may guess by this I have seen some parts of this admirable book, but I tell you this as a profound secret, which I have not named even to Lady Grey, who is therefore much puzzled why we cannot find time to read Amelia, when she knows we read en famille after supper.

I need not call upon so humane a heart as your's to grieve for all the people that are now in sincere affliction for the good young Queen of Denmark†. You are too good a subject, and too compassionate a fellow-creature not to feel for them truly.

I want to talk to you of Fontenelle's Plays, have you seen them? They are incomparable. Truth, virtue, simplicity, and good sense, are the characteristics of his heroines, and there is besides something agreeably odd and uncommon in the whole manner. Our theatre flourishes. I have been much pleased at both the revived plays, the comedy

* This account of the joint plan which produced the character of Sir Charles Grandison is curious, and the editor believes was not before suspected. Mr. Richardson's request has been before mentioned.

† Louisa youngest daughter of the late King. Her death was occasioned by an accident when far advanced in her pregnancy.

especially. We are to have a new farce of Foote's, and The Gamester*, a new prose tragedy, by a lady, both commended. Pray send me some more Epictetus, or else I shall begin to think you idle; a dose of Epictetus now and then comes very apropos in this giddy town. What a number of detached subjects! if I don't take care I shall run my Letter out of all bounds, though I cannot admire such laconic epistles as those I heard mentioned yesterday. Rich wrote to Quin to persuade him to come and act at Covent Garden, and this was his Letter and the Answer to it.

Mr. Rich,

Ih ave received your's, and am at Bath.

Quin.

Mr. Quin,

I have received your's, and you may stay at Bath and be hanged.

Rich.

* This play was at first attributed to Mrs. Carter herself.

I am

I am afraid *hanged* was not the word. My lord and my mother join with me in wishing you a most cheerful and happy new year, and many of them. Tell me sincerely, do not I in all my Letters talk too little of them and too much of myself? Talkativeness and egotism are my vices. But you must answer as sincerely as Miss Harriet Byron, or I shall say you do not deserve Sir Charles. Fie upon you, now could I pull caps with you, for verily I believe 'tis you Sir Charles so frequently goes to Canterbury to see. Well, let us part in charity, and before I ruminate any further I will subscribe myself, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's Deanery, *March* 14, 1752.

To be sure, dear Miss Carter, I ought to have writ to you at least six weeks ago, but I knew you would hear about us frequently from your sister. We are still extremely well pleased with our situation, the air, (the smoke I should say, for there is a sugar baker just by that is candying us all over as fast as he can), the exercise, the way

of life agrees with us all very well. Indeed, for my own part, it is such a length of time since I have had any illness to confine me, that I am not sure whether I do not a little want another lesson in the useful school of a sick room, to keep me from that giddiness and insolence of mind which is so apt to attend uninterrupted prosperity of any sort. There is a kind of habit one gets of being well, and prosperous, and easy, and following one's own ways without molestation, that makes one inclined to be impatient at any hindrance, as if it was somewhat not to have been expected. I really believe I could prove that a state of perpetual sufferings, vexations, and disappointments, must be actually the happiest of any, because it must in some time bring the mind to such an easy, humble, pliable state as it ought to be in always: now, whatever is the right and natural state of any thing, is, you know, indisputably the easiest and happiest*.

You will not see Sir Charles this year, but he will make his public apperance, as soon as all his equipages are ready, and such a set of friends he will bring with him as will charm you no doubt. I

* Miss Talbot's argument would be an admirable one, if it did not confound the end with the means; but her morality is better than her logic.

have

have begun reading a book which promises some laughing amusement, "The Female Quixote;" the few chapters I read to my mother last night while we were undressing were whimsical enough and not at all low. I have not read Amelia, yet, but have seen it read and commented upon much to my edification by that good Bishop of Gloucester, who seldom misses spending two or three days of the week at this deanery. Judge then if it must not be an agreeable situation that gives us so much more of his company, and in a so much more comfortable way, than when we were nearer neighbours. I have been particularly delighted with some of our afternoons, when we have sat unmolested by my dressing room fire-side, he reading Amelia (and quarreling excessively at the two first volumes) my mother and I reading or working, or following our own devices, as it might happen, and every one mixing little interruptions of chat as things come into their heads; with not a single ring at the door to disturb us.

You will not be sorry to hear that there is a bill now in the house and likely to pass, for restraining and licensing Ranelaghs of all sorts, and for many other good purposes of reformation By one clause, which to me seems an excellent one, all such places are forbid to be opened till five in the afternoon, which cuts off all at once all those destructive break-

breakfastings, which have certainly been very hurtful, by consuming the whole day in disorderly riots. The town however for all these reforming schemes is immoderately gay. The Court crowded so that people faint with the heat; balls, assemblies, and all public places as full as they can hold. But we shall all part very soon this year, and a short life you know ought to be a merry one. If you are angry with me for not writing all this while, pray write and scold me, and I will promise to do so no more; but if on the contrary you generously forgive me, write and set my heart at rest. At all events write.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *March*, 30, 1751.

Indeed, my dear Miss Talbot, I am much too reasonable to blame you for not writing to me, knowing as you did that I must have such frequent accounts from my sister. But remember I shall not be so quiet when she can no longer give me any intelligence about you; no, I do positively insist that you shall send me a message by the waggoners,

goners, or the carriers, or the market women, or by some other of those ways by which folks who do not write written hand, give information to their distant friends that they are in good health.

I hope soon to hear you are all comfortably settled at Cuddesden. Notwithstanding all the fine things you say to the advantage of perpetual sufferings, vexations, disappointments, and a sick room, you must forgive me if I am so unfriendly as to wish you may be as much as possible deprived of these blessings, and in their stead be exercised with the trials and temptations of health, ease, prosperity, and success. After all is not your scheme too much founded on a doctrine in Clarissa, which I have heard you very justly disapprove, and is it not possible for the mind to be in as safe a state from a proper and grateful enjoyment of the comforts of life, as from a patient resignation to its sorrows.

In favour of the Bishop of Gloucester's cold, his reading Amelia in silence may be tolerated, but I am somewhat scandalized that since he did not read it to you, you did not read it yourself. Methinks I long to engage you on the side of this poor unfortunate book, which I am told the fine folks are unanimous in pronouncing to be very sad stuff. The Bishop of Gloucester's excessive sad quarrel with the two first volumes I am determined to conclude

clude proceeded from the effects of his cold. How to account for Miss Mulso's unmerciful severity to Amelia is past my skill, as it does not appear but that she was in very good health when she read the book.

You will think to be sure that I am determined to call you to an account for all your omissions, when I tell you I was outrageous at your not uttering a sigh of lamentation over the departure of the Rambler, nor once mention his farewel paper. For some minutes it put me a good deal out of humour with the world, and more particularly with the great and powerful part of it. To be sure people in a closet are apt to form strange odd ideas, which as soon as they put their heads out of doors they find to be utterly inconsistent with that something or other that regulates or rather confounds the actions of mankind. In mere speculation it seems mighty absurd that those who govern states and call themselves politicians, should not eagerly decree laurels, and statues, and public support to a genius who contributes all in his power to make them the rulers of reasonable creatures. However as honours and emoluments are by no means, the infallible consequences of such an endeavour, Mr. Johnson is very happy in having proposed to himself that reward to his labours which he is sure not to be disappointed of by the stupidity or ingratitude of mankind.

It

It is to be hoped as the legislature has wisely fixed the time when Ranelagh and Vauxhall shall begin, they have determined too when they shall end, or the good people of England are too fond of the privilege of ruining themselves and breaking the laws not to lengthen out their entertainment till morning and call it a supper. Do you know if there is ever an English translation of L'Enfant's Preface to the New Testament?

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *April* 22, 1752.

I must beg a thousand pardons for my omission, my dear Miss Carter, and my absolute silence on the death of that excellent person the Rambler. I assure you I grieved for it most sincerely, and could have dropt a tear over his two concluding papers, if he had not in one or two places of the last commended himself too much; for I knew there were people whose very unjust prejudices against him would be strengthened by them. Indeed 'tis a sad thing that such a paper should

should have met with discouragement from wise, and learned, and good people too—Many are the disputes it has cost me, and not once did I come off triumphant. I have heard he means to occasionally throw some papers into the Daily Advertiser, but he has not begun yet, as he is in great affliction I hear, poor man, for the loss of his wife.

Did your sister tell you I had the pleasure of introducing her in the midst of the crowd during the music at St. Paul's, to a lady who looked with much dignity, and said she wished I could as easily introduce you? This was Lady Pomfret, who has heard so much of you from the Bishop of Gloucester, that she has been out of her wits to be acquainted with you for this last twelvemonth. Indeed you must come to London this year, I have so much for you to do, so many people for you to see. There is Lady Hertford, the Duchess of Somerset, and I cannot tell how many more who are dying to see you. Come you must, so settle your plans accordingly.

Do you know I am grown quite musical, and to such a degree that considering I have no ear nor voice I am quite ashamed of it. But what in the compass of imagination can be so fine as cathedral or oratorio music, where every power of harmony is exerted to express sentiments the most exalted, and affections the most just and noble. Fine music

wasted

wasted upon idle words and trifling thoughts has a disproportion in it that shocks me; but the other how compleat a delight! I had vast pleasure in carrying my mother this year for the first time to hear the Messiah at the Foundling. She was as much charmed as I expected.

I thank you for your offer of sending me Miss Mulso's verses, Mr. Richardson has been so good as to shew them to me. I admire her and them as I ought, and indeed from all I have heard of her character, or seen of her writing, I love and esteem her much. That is an excellent man too, though you have not loved him as you ought, but when Sir Charles appears, he will make you pay for all. By the way considering how perversely you robbed poor Clarissa of her delightful owl without the least fault in her or her best papa R., I do think you are in conscience bound to bestow voluntarily song, sonnet, elegy, ode, or stanza, either on Sir Charles or some of his friends, it may be on any subject, and in any style, there are characters adapted to all sorts, many a laugh and many a tear it will cost you as it has done us.

At last we have begun Amelia, it is very entertaining. I do love Dr. Harrison and the good Serjeant; and Mrs. James's visit to Amelia has extremely diverted me. How many Mrs. James's in that good-for-nothing London! But Mr. Fielding's heroines

heroines are always silly loving runaway girls. Amelia makes an excellent wife, but why did she marry Booth? Elfrida is a most noble piece of poetry. Arabella too, as a little book, is highly diverting, and much in fashion.

I am sorry to hear you are so much concerned for that poor wretched creature Blandy.*, and think she has been too severely judged. I fear when the trial comes on you will find too full proof of guilt, and even hardiness in guilt that is shocking to think of. Let me tell you one fact that young Goosetree the lawyer told to the Bishop of Gloucester; and observe that in her letter, or narrative, in I believe more places than one, she has said she never imagined her father to be in great circumstances. This Goosetree visited her in jail as an old acquaintance, she expressed to him great amaze at her father's being no richer, and said she had no notion but he must have been worth £10,000. Mr. Goosetree prudently told her the less she said about that the better, and she never said it afterwards, but the contrary. Some letters in Lord Macclesfield's hands falsify others of her affirmations. On the whole her idea is too terrible to dwell on.

* This dreadful and melencholy story is well known, but it is even now by no means certain that she intended her father's death. Yet if she did not, she certainly took great pains to convince the world that she did.

Mrs.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 9, 1752.

I CONGRATULATE you, dear Miss Talbot, on your retreat from the hurry and flutter of fashionable visiting to the quiet conversation of wood nymphs and hamadryads, and other good sort of company, who have wrought so happy a reformation in you, and taught you to express yourself with becoming sorrow on the death of the Rambler. It must be confessed however that you shewed an heroic spirit in defending his cause against such formidable enemies even in London. Many a battle have I too fought for him in the country but with very little success. Indeed I was extremely disheartened in my last defeat in argument with a lady of excellent skill in the weapons of plausibility, who so absolutely got the better of me, that after having displayed the whole force of my eloquence with no manner of effect on her understanding, in defence of the Rambler, she afterwards almost convinced mine that there was a tolerable degree of merit, in the idle foolish farce of "Miss in her Teens."

Teens." I must positively take care how I venture to engage with her again, for fear she should take it into her head to convince me of the wit, good sense, and morality of—Mrs. Cibber's Oracle.

Both my sister and I are much obliged to you for having introduced her to Lady Pomfret, you are very good in wishing to procure me the same honour, but I should discredit you more than ever, as if possible I look more foolish and disconcerted than ever. My company is at present so little diversified that I should feel unusually awkward at any uncommon occurrence. It is so long since I have appeared without either a shuttle or needle in my hands, that without some such plaything I should be utterly at a loss to know what to do with them, as an excess of good huswifry has prevented me from ever using a fan. In short if I was now to appear before people about whom I had more than an ordinary solicitude, I should be in so many perplexities about my hands, as to be utterly regardless how I disposed of my feet, and so infallibly tumble on my nose.

That I may not however grow an absolute savage in respect to all forms and fashions of this world, I mean if I live and prosper to go to Canterbury this summer to our Kentish races, but as for a journey to London, where you so obligingly wish me, I should as soon think of a voyage to the East-

Indies. My father is in such uncertain health, and such low spirits, that my youngest brother is entirely under my care, and his behaviour fully repays me for any sacrifices I make for his advantage. And there are such principles of honesty and simplicity in his character, that I rejoice he is not sent to a public school, where though he would make a greater proficiency in learning, he would run the hazard of becoming a less valuable man. Many an honest heart has been corrupted from a mistaken notion of self-defence, and a too early commerce with the world.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER*.

Deanery, *June* 13, 1752.

YOUR Epictetus would have been sent a fortnight ago, but his lordship had made his criticisms with a pencil, and I, fearful they would rub out by the way, am inking them all over, in which I have a thousand interruptions. What would I

* The beginning of this Letter is in page 87 of the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, the 4to. edition. It relates to the illness of Dr. Butler, Bishop of Durham.

give

give that you were this month in London! That puts me in mind of a chapter I wanted to enlarge upon to you. I will get a magical wand, and raise up old Epictetus to scold you. You a reasonable woman, and let mauvaise honte get such an empire over you. Let's see what you say. I remember it made me very angry.

If possible *I look more foolish and disconcerted than ever.* Indeed, my dear, it is very foolish to look disconcerted in the way I have seen you do. Summons up all your fortitude to overcome this monster. Whence is this disconcertedness? It seems to acknowledge a superiority in the folks of the world, that, let them be ever so titled and spangled, they have not. You, my dear Miss Carter, cannot come into company that are really your superiors, and will you so basely betray the cause of goodness and reason as to bid them, in spite of their native spirit and dignity, look awkward in the presence of mere outside? I am very serious in this point; it is a duty for you, and a very important one, to get rid of this awkwardness you describe, that must always have a needle or shuttle in its hand. Learn the exercise of the fan; I will furnish you with fan-mounts. Indeed such a one as you, were Providence to call you out into the world, might be of such vast use in it, that I cannot bear to hear you talk in this way; and

should

should your wishes be answered by a continuance of a retired life, the being free from that painful diffidence could possibly do you no harm, and indeed it is but an effort of reason and resolution to conquer it, and an effort worthy of them. For my sake I beseech you to make it, and I have as strong a claim to your performance of this task as can be wished, from my being with the truest regard and affection, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 23, 1752.

I am heartily sorry, my dear Miss Talbot, to find by to-day's Paper that your apprehensions were too well grounded. The loss * of so great and good a man, in such a rank, is a general misfortune; but I cannot help finding myself particularly interested in it, as it so immediately affects those for whose happiness I have such uncommon reason to be solicitous.

Don't hurry yourself about Epictetus, for I don't

* The Bishop of Durham, whose illness was mentioned in Miss Talbot's last Letter.

want it, but pray entreat my Lord not to be so unmerciful as to write his comments in a manner as precarious as the ranging of the Sybilline oracles. To speak an honest truth, I am much inclined to think this translation, about which you kindly say so many civil things, a most intolerably bad one; and yet, notwithstanding such inclination, from a conviction that my Lord and you are much better judges than I am, out of an odd kind of humility, I use all possible efforts to get over the extraordinary difficulty of acquiring as advantageous an opinion as may be of my own performance. One would imagine from all this that I translated, as Plato says poets make verses; and yet if I do, the case is to be sure very uncommon, and the first instance perhaps that any translator was ever known to translate by a spirit of enthusiasm.

Something must be said in answer to your kind exhortations for me to get rid of my awkward bashfulness, and yet what to say I know not, as it seems an incurable evil. From the very first remembrance of myself I can recollect frequent instances of this folly, when the terrors I was in about entering a room used to damp all the joy that children feel at the thoughts of going abroad. But you are really too severe in fancying that 'tis the glitter and finery of this world that awes me. Even in this place, where we are all nearly on a

level,

level, I am often as much flurried as in ever so splendid an assembly; and often have been kept from a favourite walk, where we all meet of an evening, because there was not any person of years and experience in the world there, to take me by the hand and introduce me. But foolish as this idle timidity makes me appear, in one instance I hope it will never influence me, nor the reverence of any one cause me to fall, but that I shall always be enabled with a proper courage to bear my testimony to what appears to me to be right, and oppose whatever seems to injure the cause of truth and virtue in all companies and upon all fitting occasions. Thus much by an honest endeavour Providence has put in every one's power, but whether such untractable things as trembling nerves and fluttering spirits are to be reasoned into firmness and tranquillity is by no means clear; and I much question whether the strongest arguments in the world could help me to make a graceful curtesy or enter a room with a becoming air.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

I must indulge myself, dear Miss Carter, in writing to you, but shall not date my Letter, because you would wonder to find me neither at St. Paul's nor dear Cuddesden, but at a very pretty place in Surry that you never heard of. Here we have been a week, and are to stay some few days longer, with an uncle and aunt and cousin that you would love if you knew them.

I heard with pleasure of the agreeable day you were to spend with Miss Mulso. I hope she has made you a perfect convert to a worthy man that you was too angry with, and who has the highest regard for you. Do not be frightened, I mean nobody more dangerous than Mr. Richardson. You have been much the subject of my conversation this last fortnight, and you know not how many handsome things I heard said of you by a very good friend of your's in Richmond Gardens. But what I do very sincerely wish you to imagine is, how very much I felt myself obliged to you while reading over a parcel of your first Letters. How many thanks do I owe you for your kind partiality, for all the kind advice you have so gently sug-

gested

gested to me, and from the credit it does me in my own eyes that such a mind and heart as your's should be desirous of a near acquaintance with mine. I am afraid in the course of our acquaintance you must often have experienced a useful though unpleasant truth, that the things we most set our hearts upon are very seldom worth the trouble we take to attain them. How insignificant do I feel myself! how poor a nothing! The languor attendant on a slight fever has taken away all my superfluous spirits, and I see myself in a true light, honest indeed, and well meaning, but wonderfully useless. While one goes on in a daily routine of employments, one is apt to think the time filled up in an exemplary manner. But what have I been doing since I came here? giving trouble and reading idle books to while away the hours of prescribed solitude. Sometimes I fancy solitude and leisure is all my mind wants to expand a pair of eagle's wings, and soar away nobody knows whither. How gladly would I embrace wearisomeness, lowness, pain itself, could I but find my mind improve by them. But is not what mortifies one's vanity an improvement? Dear, dear, with what companions have I been spending my lonely hours! Arlequin, a stupidissima Princess Mesirida, an infamous Con. Philips, and a ten times more profligate

gate Jack Connor*! Fie upon it! Why was not your Epictetus printed in a fair large letter, and standing upon the shelves instead of all this rubbish? Pray tell me, and do not beat me for this nonsensical and impertinent question, Did your great candour and goodness never take it into its head to think tolerably well of that woman, that Teresa Constantia? How vilely can a smooth tongue polish over the ugly countenance of vice! And she has rather a smoother, I think, than that poor but too surely guilty wretch about whom you writ. The tragedy of the Fair Parricide. (It was you, was it not?) Good heaven, what wretchedness is human nature liable to! But gratefully let it be added, of what excellence is it made capable, and to what heights does it sometimes rise! How ennobling the very tears, and sorrows, and anxieties of virtuous friendship and affectionate remembrance!

I never answered you about the authoress of certain Miscellanies†. Is it possible you could really

* Con. Philips's Memoirs are probably well known still, but the stupid as well as profligate novel of Jack Connor has sunk into deserved oblivion. The Editor has not the honour of the acquaintance of the Princess Mesirida.

† By Mrs. Jones (unless the Editor mistakes). In the poem alluded to there is certainly more humour than delicacy.

admire

admire them? Is it the cleanliness or delicacy of Holt Waters, or the Letter to a Physician, that delights you? The Letters appear to me in a forced style—in the very "false gallop" of wit! I saw one the other day writ to a lady, whom she has a most outrageous friendship for of about six weeks standing, that deals in so many hyperboles, and hyperboles thrown away on matters not at all worthy of them, as confirms me more and more to keep far out of the way of all high-flown acquaintance. True genius, wit, and unaffected friendship, how very different! However, let me do this lady justice; I have never heard otherwise of her than as a very well-behaved and discreet woman; but for your beginning a correspondence of bel esprit with her, I cannot allow of it by any means.

Well, being now, on July 21st, arrived at Tetsworth, within six miles of beloved Cuddesden, I will e'en with this date dispatch my Letter to Deal, first filling this fifth side, which I have vanity enough to think will please you, because I can assure you I am now perfectly well, and the return of health has brought with it a flow of spirits such as one ought to feel, if it were but to express one's gratitude for the blessing.

It came into my head, upon looking over some of those excellent Letters I was telling you of, to ask you whether you do not continue the same friendship

friendship with Mrs. Bargrave that you kept up with Miss Lynch, at least by correspondence, with as much satisfaction as if she still bore her former name. This matter was once much at your heart; tell me all about it (as the children say). Does not her living in town make you sometimes wish your son Harry there? I know you and he are inseparable; but do not get into such idle mama-panics about him, as I am told you continually do, because panics are endless, and make reasonable silly, and happy people miserable. You teach him all those principles on which persons ought to take care of themselves, and by which they are made worth that care. After this do not be afraid to venture him out of your sight.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 12, 1752.

Many thanks, dear Miss Talbot, for that fifth side, which assured me you was quite well. Poor soul, that you should ever be shut up in a room with such racketting people as Con. Philips, and Jack Connor. It was quite inhuman to confine

fine you to such company; and I can never give my consent to your spending another week in Surry, unless you are suffered to walk quietly and soberly through the world with John Bunyan *.

You laugh at me for my charity to all kind of people, as some folks laugh at me for my charity to all kind of books, and indeed when people tell me they are not wicked, it is with much difficulty I can believe them so. However I do not look upon this said Teresa Constantia as absolutely a saint, nor even, as a Scotch captain to the great scandal of a friend of mine affirmed to be, *an honour to her sex*, for seriously I think her own account proves her a very bad woman, in more instances than one. Such as she is, I hear she at present keeps a boarding school at Jamaica. An excellent academy for young ladies!

Miss Mulso's visit was really most delightful, only too short. She has an uncommon exactness of understanding and lively agreeable turn of conversation, and her conduct seems to be governed by the best and noblest principles. You have often heard her described by her friend and your friend, and I am sorry I have no pretensions to say my friend, though we are upon mighty civil terms, and write very handsome postscripts about each other.

* Author of the Pilgrim's Progress.

How

How truly do you judge of my follies! That doubtful paragraph of your's did really, though I know not why or wherefore, put me into a fright. I had for a moment absolutely forgot that some folks were married, that other folks were galloped away ready to break their necks to look for a wife in some distant country, and there are upon the whole no folks in the world that trouble their heads about me. And it was not till I saw the quiet harmless name of Richardson, that all these comfortable considerations occurred to my thoughts.

I cannot sufficiently thank you for the manner in which you speak of those trifling Letters, which have no other merit than having procured me such a treasure of excellent answers. I have often wondered by what happy assurance I could venture at first to trouble you with an impertinent Letter. And what obligations have I not to you for the manner in which you treated that Letter, by giving so kind an encouragement as made it a means of introducing me to the acquaintance of a family whose regard I consider as one of the principal advantages of my life; to whose friendship I have been so much obliged; and from whose superior talents and excellent example I have had the means of so much improvement. I always think with gratitude of the obligation I owe Mr. Wright. It was he who first excited my curiosity about you, and kindly contributed

buted all in his power to gratify it, All the expectations which he had raised fell below my own experience: and that realities may sometimes exceed our most lively imagination, is a useful and very pleasing truth on which you so civilly congratulate me, indeed I never have found, nor desire to find any such thing. I know you have been angry with me for this minute or more, but your extreme perverseness drives me to say all this, for why will you not suffer me to enjoy my own opinion about you, considering how dear it is to me, and how harmless to you. All the grave arguments you make use of to prove your own insignificancy, are thrown away upon me, nor is it possible they should convince yourself; but there is perhaps in every human mind some one peculiar whim, some strange oddity by which in some instance or other it contradicts the judgement of all the world besides.

Though I could talk by the hour of Miss Lynch, I know not what intelligence to give you about Mrs. Bargrave, except what I mention with great pleasure, that by all accounts she is very happy. Though I seldom have any information of it from herself; she was never very fond of writing, and is now much more negligent than ever, I do not hear from her once in half a year.

And now, dear Miss Talbot, I will talk to you about my own happinesses, because I know you

will

will be pleased to hear of them. My father I thank God is in better health and spirits since his return from London than I have known him for years. He has taken a curate, a point we had long been endeavouring to gain, but his great tenderness for the interests of his family made him defer it. My uncle has made him a present of £1000 to enable him to do it without feeling the expence. I could not resist telling you this trait of generosity because I know you will be particularly pleased with it. My uncle has declared he has further intentions for the advantage of the family, for these we feel obliged, but they cannot make any of us half so happy as what he has done for my father's present ease and comfort.

You are very good to warn me about my foolish panics for my pupil, and to prove I endeavour to mend, I shall leave him to go to the races, though I think it more than probable in the midst of the assembly, I shall wish the music over, and be longing to hear him stunning my ears with Greek and Latin.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Sept.* 22, 1752.

Your kind enquiry, my dear Miss Carter, shall not lie unanswered. I will at least give you the satisfaction of knowing your three friends here, whom I know you most sincerely pity *, are God be thanked in good health. I should before have thanked you for the real pleasure your former Letter gave us, had I not been in such a painful state of anxiety as made even writing to you irksome, since I could not do it without saying much on the subject my heart was so full of, and could not say any thing of that which did not hurt me. Writing is still painful to me, and oftener does me more harm than good.

I honor your uncle for his excellently well timed and well judged kindness to your father, I do not

* Upon account of the death of their excellent friend Dr. Benson, Bishop of Gloucester. The rest of Miss Talbot's Letter which relates to this subject, having been published in the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, is not inserted here. By mistake it is there said (in P. 89. quarto edition) to relate to the Bishop of Durham; which error was corrected in the second edition.

think

think you can acknowledge it better than by coming and spending the winter with your aunt in town. I am selfish in wishing this, for what can be happier than you are at Deal just now, and I rejoice at it.

I wish most heartily I could have been with our dear departed friend during the last weeks of his illness, but though often earnestly pressed to let us come he would not consent to it, and perhaps it was better on the whole that he did not. Good Mr. Benson was with him from the middle of July, and we expect him here next week. A melancholy meeting; but every particular that he can tell me, will I lay up in my memory as its richest treasure. Next week we propose moving to St. Paul's for my Lord's October residence, where I shall hope soon to see your sister.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Oct.* 1, 1752.

Most sincerely do I wish, dear Miss Talbot, that it was in my power to do you any good, to say any thing that might a little amuse you,

you, and turn your thoughts from a subject, which I fear too tenderly and too deeply affects them. You talk of making enquiries and dwelling upon scenes, which must be too exquisitely painful to a heart like your's: for you imagine yourself *cheerful*, when you are only *resigned*. Till the first severe sensibilities of grief are a little worn off, every such melancholy indulgence must be hurtful to a mind which needs not any awakening call to thinking. Let me entreat you as much as possible to divert your thoughts at present from the sad employment to which they are so strongly inclined. Let me enforce the request as the advice of him whose memory you so much revere. Nothing could be more truly noble than his refusing to see those, who he knew would be so deeply touched by his separation from them, and he plainly shewed by this refusal, that he thought such mournful images as you seem too fond of indulging were rather to be avoided than sought. Do not be angry with me that I wish your thoughts to be at present a little dissipated and varied by some kind of trifling amusement. Hereafter the passages which would now sink your spirits, and do you hurt, may be recollected with tranquillity and cheerfulness, and afford you the most delightful contemplations.

I have had a very pressing invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Vere, but I have conjured up a hundred reasons

reasons that prevent my accepting it though I have some strong temptations. I need not tell you, I hope, that one of the strongest is my being in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's. But here I am fixed and here I shall remain. I was a fortnight at Canterbury and met many of my friends collected by the race week, but whatever amusement I found there I was restless till I returned to my pupil whose every hour is precious now, and of the utmost consequence, as the most short lived of the human faculties is memory, which cannot be crowded too fast, while it is capable of retaining whatever impressions are made upon it. Adieu! dear Miss Talbot, do not write to me while writing is painful to you: my sister will let me know how you go on.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Nov.* 13, 1752.

I hope, dear Miss Carter, your sister has at the time she sent you news of us, conveyed my threatenings, as I had the vanity to desire she

 would,

would, that if you refused coming to town this winter I would never write to you again? It was a poor threatening I own, but I mean to try whether all the fine things you and I have so often quarrelled about were mere compliment or the language of your heart. If you do really think any Letter of mine worth a shilling, behold the single shilling with which I disinherit you for ever if you presume this once to disobey me in my favorite point. I have let you alone for several years, because I thought you had reasons which in some degree excused you, but they no longer exist. Your Strephon has found a Delia long ago, and in him you would only find an agreeable friend full of respect and regard, who always expresses a strong sense of your obliging and handsome behaviour to him during that *stormy February*. No other stormy February can come. For it is impossible, were the world full of Strephons, that those friends to whom you have more and more endeared yourself by all your conduct since, can ever think of trying you with new difficulties, when they reflect how ready you are to sacrifice every other wish of your heart, may you but be indulged in that one, for which you have the most generous and noble motives, of not being obliged to give a hand without a heart.

Your pupils may very well do without you, for have they not been happy in you for years? And

is it not fair that we Londoners who have much to learn should be the better for you now and then? They are too generous I am sure not to allow it. And may not you be the better for us? A winter of the Bishop of Oxford's company must be an advantage to any body; besides that of some other persons, whom I have chose out for you, and whom I know you will be charmed with. Alas! had you been in town last winter—but we will sit and talk of him, you will help me to pass less heavily those hours that I then had the happiness and blessing of spending with the most amiable, the most excellent of men. Will not a motive of charity prevail with you, think only how much good you will do my mother and all of us.

The love of retirement seems to grow upon you. But it ought not. The use of retirement is to fit us for moving more reasonably, more beneficially in the world. And mixing in the world is of use to rub off the rust (forgive me) which the best and noblest minds will contract in too long a retirement. I shall positively expect you in town about Christmas. My Lord, my Mother, Miss Mulso, every body entreats you to send a favorable answer, and let me have it soon, very soon.

We mean to enjoy this delightful place till near Christmas; riding, walking, and admiring the fair face even of wintry nature every morning, and

quiet

quiet and leisure in the long, though never tedious evenings. In our way hither we spent a week at a place that has given me a new and delightful set of ideas; the Duchess of Somerset's at Percy Lodge. From my very earliest memory I have from a distance admired her character, but I find her to be much more than my highest imagination had formed. The best and the frankest of hearts: the most polite, the most easy, the most friendly behaviour: and understanding every way improved, a taste just and elegant, a candour and goodness that prevents one's being in the least uneasy or afraid of a person whom one must at once admire, love, and revere. I have thought it peculiarly happy that this excellent woman is become known to us just at this time, when one particularly wanted to be reconciled to this painful varying world. But she will not be in town this winter. Lady Gray and Lady Anson will; but they live in a world vastly separate from our's, and cannot enliven many a lonely evening when you, dear Miss Carter, will be kindly at hand. I know you will. I would not thus urge it, did I not think it would be as good for you as for us.

One more question before I conclude. Pray what is become of poor poetry? Have you never an owl or a nightingale flying about the world, that could take its flight hither? Do not utterly bury so admirable a talent, indulge the delightful vein now

and then, if it were but to make amends for admiring the pert insipid Mrs. ———. I dare not say who, because she is my neighbour, and I believe a very good sort of woman.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 20, 1752.

I CANNOT give a stronger proof, dear Miss Talbot, that what you most perversely call fine things came from my heart, than the impossibility I find of disobeying you in spite of all the resolutions I had formed not to stir from this quiet retirement. I am too much terrified by your threatening (O dear, O dear, never write to me again!) to offer any thing in opposition to your reasons. Some of them I acknowledge to be very good ones: and I perfectly feel their evidence, that I shall be in the neighbourhood of St. Paul's. My objections as I am determined they shall be of no weight against the obligations I have to my Lord, Mrs. Talbot, and yourself for being so good as to take so much trouble about me, I will not mention. I therefore

fore live in hopes of seeing my dear friends at the Deanery a little after Christmas if my father will permit, he is at present in town.

If there be ever a Strephon in the world, it is only sending him a command to die and get out of the way, or if the man should be so obstinate to persist in living, as you know lovers have sometimes very comfortable stomachs, I am determined at least to banish him the realm, in short I will do any thing rather than be disinherited with a single ten thousand pounds.

I heartily congratulate you on the pleasure you have received from an acquaintance with the Duchess of Somerset, who is certainly a most excellent and amiable character. It is quite vexatious that such people should be perpetually running away from the world, and especially where the advantage of high rank gives them an opportunity of being of such extensive use.

You are unmerciful in your raillery upon me about your neighbouring authoress. But surely it was her letters, not her poetry I commend. I have nothing to say about myself in this article, for not so much as a sparrow have I sent hopping about the world this age. Between my pupils, my gossiping, and Epictetus, I have scarcely ever a minute's leisure, except sometimes to write a dull stupid Letter. In reward of the du ful disposition I am in

at

at present, I hope you will soon give me the pleasure of knowing you have altered your will. I am just setting out on a walk of three miles to dinner, and Harry is bawling all manner of hard words in my ears, so I must conclude.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Nov.* 29, 1752.

If a bill is sent up drawn upon Mr. Plumb and Co. the receipt must be notified directly. And here have we received from our good Correspondent at Deal a bill of higher value than Messrs. Plumb can pay, payable in less than a month, and no notification sent of it during a whole week. Dear Miss Carter forgive me. I am so glad, so thankful, so obliged to you, much more than I can express: but I have not had, nor have I, nor am I likely to have, perhaps till we meet, any leisure to attempt telling you how much. Not only the fine mornings, and the sociable dispositions of all our good neighbours steal away (steal is far too gentle a word) all my day-light hours, but the present

present distress of our nearest neighbour engages every spare hour. Mr. Smyth, the squire of the village as I used to call him, has just ended a long, but, poor man, a most indolent life, and his daughter, a truly deserving and amiable woman, is in very sincere affliction, and therefore has great demands upon our time. Therefore this once you must be content with this, which I will humbly call a farthing instead of what I vainly called a shilling; 'tis but the earnest of a thousand twisted notes by and by. I long to hear that Dr. Carter does not object; but I am sure he cannot. Adieu! my Lord and my mother join in thanking and commending you, and I am with the sincere sense of gratitude which so very kind a sacrifice of your own inclinations to our wishes so highly deserves. Your's, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Dec.* 17, 1752.

Did I ever tell you I was reading Madame de Maintenon's Letters? They have all marks of genuineness, but no vouchers, and yet one reasons upon them as if they were undoubtedly genuine. She

She seems to have been both a great and a good woman. Not the greater or the better for an early friendship with Ninon, and a many years connection with Madame de Montespan. But having chose to place herself in that uneasy and dangerous situation, she seems to have behaved nobly in it. And as I firmly believe she never was mistress to Lewis XIV. and was undoubtedly for many years his wife, there is a peculiar humility and quietness that is very admirable in her, never desiring to be acknowledged, but rather disclaiming all honors *, and looking on herself solely in the light of a person raised by Providence, *pour faire le salut du Roi.* To make him a good and religious man. Content to see him die in a manner becoming those Christian sentiments she had endeavoured to inspire him with. She retired calmly into her convent, and resigned all the pomp of the world without a sigh.

Pray can you tell me any history of a new paper called the Adventurer? We hope much from it, though we have seen but one. It seems, with a

* There seems to be no doubt of the genuineness of Madame de Maintenon's Letters, and it is very natural that they should represent her character in the light in which Miss Talbot considers it: But her character was in reality very different; she was religious but artful, ambitious, and by no means delicate in her connections, nor constant to her benefactress. The best part of her conduct was after the death of the King.

style

style not unlike the Rambler, to go upon that amusing scheme which people expected from the title of *The Rambler*.

Strange revolutions in the London world! The Leicester house world I mean, I am sure you will be heartily sorry for them. How much happier is your brother Harry than if he was of Royal birth! No cables are formed to set him against his preceptress, and persuade him that she confines him too much to musty Greek and Latin! What lovely Autumn weather we have in the midst of Winter! —Winter, old age, death.—Terrifying words as we silly mortals by false connections of ideas think them, when really there is no terror in them, but the contrary.

One is always in a hurry the last week. Even of a Sunday I have folks to speak to, children to school, and many such matters to dispatch; and then for a quiet hour or two such as perhaps—— but yes, London has its quiet hours too, for people who keep out of the impertinent racket of it. To-day's post tells me of a person named for one of the great posts vacant, that you and every body will be pleased with: The good Bishop of Peterborough. Adieu; remember when you come to London, one may live happily at Gyara *,

* A wretched barren island, one of the Cyclades, to which Roman criminals were banished; proverbial for misery.

and

and ought not to be rooted like a plant to one spot.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, Dec. 20, 1752.

Yes I am heartily sorry for the revolutions in Leicester house; before I received your account I could not help making some enquiry about it, of a person who seemed to know something of the matter, and was told the governors were displaced because they did not bring up their pupil *whig* enough. This was a form of expression utterly unintelligible to my understanding, and I found myself much better informed by you. How very wicked and foolish are the politics of this world!

Nothing can be juster than your observations *, I know not however whether some of the Stoic ex-

* These observations relative to the philosophy of Epictetus are omitted here, because they have already been printed in the account given of that translation. See Mrs. Carter's Memoirs.

travagancies

travagancies which carry the appearance of self sufficiency and pride, might not have been the effects of piety, and a zeal to vindicate the ways of Providence. To persons unacquainted with the doctrines of a future state, there seemed to be no other effectual way of reconciling the apparently unequal distribution of things, with the justice and goodness of God, than by renouncing the affections, contradicting the feelings of the human heart, and denying that pain which was often the lot of virtue, to be an evil.

Well at length my father is arrived from London, and mayhap——. There are some misses coming in all possible expedition to spend some time at Deal. And now I suppose you conclude me quietly turning back to my repose in these shades of indolence and obscurity, and perfectly well contented with dreaming of those friends, whom I was lately flattered with the hopes of seeing. But indeed you have writ me broad awake, and I cannot for the life of me get into my nap again. In the spirit of charity now I know you have already thought of half a dozen opiates for me, but I take exercise to be a better method, and a journey to London, if I live and prosper, in spite of the misses, I shall have. But it will not be till February. My father has been so good as to propose my taking a lodging, a thing of all others I wished, and was half inclined

clined to ask for, but his kindness in mentioning it himself proves that it is with his full approbation. He will soon be in London, and fix on a place for me in the environs of St. Paul's: I shall be within a short walk of my sister, and the call of a twisted note from Dean's Court. I am really quite delighted with this scheme, for a thousand reasons.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's Deanery, *Jan.* 29, 1753.

How kindly have you, my dear Miss Carter, persisted in your kind intention of coming to town this spring! and how unkindly have I omitted thanking you for it. I have been poorly with a cold, but am getting better; it has confined me for a fortnight, and in this time of idleness I have betaken myself (a very pretty compliment you will say) to read over all the Letters you have wrote me for many a year past. They have edified and humbled me greatly. One would think by some of your answers, that in those days I scrupled the misemployment or unemployment of any moment. Vain animal! It was fit I should be reduced to studying

studying Jemmy Jessamy and Betty Barnes, and to wishing heartily, as I have done many an evening to no sort or purpose, for the sight of a card-table. But to return to your Letters. You cannot think how much I have been mended by them.

I like the Adventurers; we all like them exceedingly; and I fancy they will soon become very generally fashionable. There was not a fault that the most captious found in the Rambler that is not obviated in these papers. They do not abound in hard words, they are varied with a thousand amusing stories, they touch with humour on the daily follies and peculiarities of the times. They want nothing but now and then a little of your assistance, for such writers should be assisted, that they may by the help of their correspondents now and then get a holiday. Look over your *considering drawer*, and if you have any old sketches that were intended for the Rambler, bring them up, I beseech you. Don't think by commending the Adventurer I give up the cause of the Rambler; I discern Mr. Johnson through all the papers that are not marked A, as evidently as if I saw him through the keyhole with the pen in his hand.

Well, and so you come up the 15th, that's my good Miss Carter, and I hope you will find London a pretty place. You have all our best wishes for a safe journey. I ought to have sent you our

best

best wishes in due season for many happy new years to yourself and friends, but indeed you had them. This last year has been a very afflicting one to us; and even the new year is tinged with melancholy from the loss of the good Bishop of Cloyne, and the distress of his amiable family, whom we have just known enough to sympathize in their affliction. But my mother and I determined (I think very wisely) last night, that it is a serious duty not to feel too much even for others, and that the distresses around us (I know another instance within the same space of time that has sincerely grieved me) ought to make us turn our eyes with the more cheerful thankfulness on the blessings of one's own situation. The mind would else contract too deep a gloom. So I will go to the concert to-night, and be as gay as though there was no such thing as misery in the world; yet such gaiety must be founded on the conviction, that all this world's miseries shall turn out for happiness in the end to those who go through their trials as they ought, and must be accompanied (else it would be unfeeling hardness of heart) with affectionate wishes that those who are now incapable of enjoying such a cheerful hour may at least receive every relief and support that is for the present needful, and may in time be restored to the sunny part of this checquered walk through life; for trifling and momentary

tary as this sunshine of gaiety is, it is useful to conduct us through our journey to those regions where clouds and darkness are no more.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Percy Lodge, *May* 12, 1758.

I will not, my dear Miss Carter, attempt to write you an ingenious or witty Letter, because a very pretty auricula is waiting for me to draw its picture, and would be faded before I could say half the wise and entertaining things that undoubtedly I have to say. But a few lines I must send, were it but to thank you for being my proxy at North End, as well as for your care of my mother and my other children, and likewise to tell you in honest truth, that I am as well as you can wish me, never slept better in all my life than last night, nor did more justice to a leg of mutton than I have just been doing.

Let me know how your schemes stand for staying or going, and let not on any account my wishes interfere

terfere with your convenience; though your being in town now is a most real convenience to me, as well as a great satisfaction, and the hope of your continuing in it after my return some little time is the only thing that makes me patient with the loss of these days; they pass, however, so agreeably, and I find so much good in every way from being here, that I can only wish myself in London for your sake. Other folks one is sure of meeting there next year.

When you see Mr. Richardson give my kind love and service to him; if he has any thing to say to me, he may enclose a note either in your's or my mother's Letter. Do not write to me if it perplexes you; if not, every line gives me pleasure.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

St. Paul's Deanery, *May* 13, 1755.

I know not what supplement I can write to Mrs. Talbot's Letter, unless it be to tell you what ten to one she may not have told you herself, how extremely well satisfied she is in your absence, which

which she proves beyond all contradiction by declaring every five minutes, that she never thinks about you when you are out of her sight. She does moreover greatly comfort herself by the reflection that she may now do as she pleases; a resolution so gallant and spirited, that I am determined to do all in my power to aid and abet her in the performance of it. We have hitherto, in great moderation, only made the tour of all the rooms in the deanery; but if you should hear of our flying to the cupola of St. Paul's, or the top of the Monument, you must e'en take the consequence of leaving giddy people to follow their own devices. For my own part, however I might otherwise be disposed to find a great vacuity in the world from your absence, it is impossible, as long as the plumb-cake lasts, that I should be able to make any very melancholy reflections upon the levity and inanity of mortal things.

It will give you extreme pleasure to be told, that your friend Mr. Baildon has for a sufficient time been confined to his bed by a fit of the gout; but a fit of the gout is not to be had for love nor money for poor Mr. Savage; nay, the utmost efforts of all the choristers and singing-boys could not furnish him with so much as a cold, not a regular creditable cold. He has tried at fabricating one for himself, but it would not do. Would it not be an act

of charity, as you have no further use for your cough, to send it to him.

I saw Mr. Richardson this morning, and he heartily abused and perplexed me. Surely there is not a more difficult task in the world than for a person not absolutely determined to lie, to contradict another who speaks truth. I am to go to North End on Tuesday, and return the next day. Mr. Richardson and Miss Mulso talk a great deal about being obliged to you for this expedition, but no more think of making any acknowledgments for this important favour to me, than they would at a show, of paying their expence to the puppet which moves by wires and strings, instead of the person who puts it in action. When I come back from North End I shall be ready for another excursion, only if you should have made a promise for me to spend a few days with any of your friends in the calmy air of the Orkneys, be so good as to give me timely notice to discharge it, for it would be rather inconvenient to me to take such a trip at a minute's warning.

Mrs. Talbot, by a most heroic beckoning, brought Mr. Mence to me to-day. His visit to you was merely from gratitude, and to assure you that he never had the most distant idea of absenting himself; and I comforted the poor man by the assurance that you was convinced he had not. If there be

be any other favorite man, or favorite cat, on whom you are charitably disposed to bestow either good advice, or tar-water, or kisses, if you will honor me with your commission, I shall be extremely glad to discharge it. In the last article, however, always excepting Dr. B. and, unless in a case of utter extremity, Mr. ——.

A thousand thanks for your note last night, and the good intelligence it contained. Does not all this nonsense I have been writing prove that I am following your advice, and am quite free from fancies. What an enormous long Letter must Mrs. Talbot's be, to which this is a supplement. Adieu!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

St. Paul's Deanery, *May* 17. 1753.

You were extremely good, dear Miss Talbot, to stop in the midst of your pursuit of so fugitive a beauty, and bestow a few minutes upon me. Your Letter has been of great use to my imagination, and to let you see how very reasonable I am, the "leg of mutton" has so well satisfied me,

that I do not absolutely require you to eat a whole sheep by the next time you write.

I had the happiness at my return from North End to find my Lord and Mrs. Talbot quite well and in good spirits; and upon examination, found Mrs. Talbot had very prettily done her duty in the article of visiting. She is going out upon the same laudable scheme to-night, which has occasioned some omissions in her Letter to you, and she desires me to tell you that Mrs. Clarke is brought to bed of a daughter, and that Mrs. Wickham, of Gassington, is dead.

What shall I say about my own schemes? Positively I do not know, except that I am very happy in their being a matter of concern to you. You know how strong my temptation is to remain in London a few days after your return, but whether that will be practicable or no I am utterly unable to determine till I hear from Deal. One thing is most certain, that I wish you to stay where you are as long as you can; as the amendment of your health will make me a perfect recompence for the loss of your society, and that is more than I could say of any one thing else in the world.

I am afraid you have thought me rather graceless about the visit to North End, and so perhaps in some degree I was; but indeed it was a little unfortunately circumstanced. People who make it a

point

point never to squall, and do not often speak, have nevertheless their feelings; and however tranquil I might appear about the matter, I had too much set my heart upon going there *with* you, not to find some odd kind of reluctance at going there *without* you; and you cannot think what a difference this trifling circumstance made with regard to people whom in every other view I most sincerely love and esteem. From this account you will perhaps conclude, that in utter despair I retired to the garden, and was as solitary as possible from absolute disaffection to every body who did not look and talk like you. O no indeed; when I was once got there I was as sociable and good-humoured as even you could wish me. I have a strange stubborn constitutional disposition to be pleased, which I do not always find it possible totally to subdue either by the refinement of my imagination or the perverseness of my will. Upon the whole, I spent those two days very agreeably, and am much obliged to you for making an engagement for me to good Mr. Richardson, which I never should have had spirits enough to make for myself. I have been to visit him this afternoon, and rejoice his heart with your message. I enclose you a note from him, and a Letter from the Adventurer, which I cannot answer without your advice.

I have stood greatly in need of your assistance to-day

to-day at St. Paul's, as Mrs. Talbot would not give me her's, and sent me to church by myself to pronounce upon Dr. Hautboise singing by the decision of my own solitary ears, and I could not bribe them to engage so heartily in the Doctor's interest as I could have wished. Now I am talking about Minor Canons I must not omit telling you, that the person you have named will not do. My Lord says that a half residence is not to be allowed as a condition at first entering upon a Minor Canonry.

I wish you had left me some of your ideas with your pen and ink. I am sure if you had seen them wrote down by any body else you would have said it was the best Letter you ever read. I have wrote my head into a thick fog, but can plainly see through it that I am, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Percy Lodge, *May* 20, 1753.

You have made me very happy, my dear Miss Carter, giving me hopes that you will delay your journey, I hope for a week at least. Had you gone on Thursday I should have had no com-

fort in staying here three days longer, which I now enjoy exceedingly.

We are very much pleased with the three last Adventurers. I know not what to say to the Letter you enclosed, but I fancy there is no great difficulty in the matter. He may be broke for omitting some punctilio—I suppose that implies no real fault; or he may, which is perhaps better and more the way, be obliged to resign by cold looks and affrontive behaviour of both his superiors, equals, and inferiors. Every scoundrel may think he can now with impunity insult him, and they may be encouraged in this, and set upon it purposely by the superiors. I return his Letter that you may answer it as you like *.

My Paper runs low, and besides, my paquet would be too large if I afforded you and my mother more than half a sheet apiece; I have only room therefore to repeat my thanks, and to assure dear sister Betty that I am, &c.

* This and other hints of the same kind relate to the story of Eugenio, Nos. 64, 65, 66. Of this Dr. Hawkesworth says in his last number, that he received the first hints for it from a friend. This friend appears to have been Mrs. Carter. She was always extremely anxious to bring the practice of duelling into disrepute, and to her probably was owing that part of the character of Sir Charles Grandison.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 2, 1753.

THE activity and spirit of a seventeen miles' walk was quite necessary, my dear Miss Talbot, to enliven me after the stupidity of a tiresome journey, with no very sprightly conversation in the coach. My company consisted of two people entirely of the Squire kind, who were much more entertaining to each other than to me. Their discourse for the whole day turned upon horses and dogs with very little interruption, except now and then a word upon the weather, the dust, and the heat, in pure condescension, I believe, to my capacity, and to give me an opportunity of sometimes sharing in the conversation: however, the people in their way meant to be very civil, and I was not much inclined to quarrel with them for not calling me away very often from my visits to the deanery. We got to Canterbury about seven, and indeed I did as you bid me, enquire about a voiture to Deal, but must confess I was heartily glad there was none. After making a few visits, and withstanding many temptations to stay a few days at Canterbury, I went

I went to bed, and set out the next morning, in a fine, cool, cloudy air, for Brook*, where I found a good breakfast, and the usual good-humour of Mrs. Masters, whose original language quite exhilarated my spirits. About eleven I set out with great gaiety for my next stage of four miles, where, though I did not absolutely eat two bones of mutton and a wing of a goose, I made a tolerable proficiency in gooseberry-pye, then drank tea, and between two and three proceeded four miles further, and again rested an hour and half, which, considering Deal was full in my view, was surely a high effort of virtue. But indeed I had during the whole day performed amazing acts of prudence; for, however slightly I might in general be disposed to treat the care of my insignificant self, I could not help thinking it of great importance as the subject of a promise to you, and considering myself through the whole expedition as your property, I performed my charge as scrupulously and punctually as I should have done if you had entrusted me with your dormouse. About six I got safe to Deal, and had the happiness of finding all my friends well. I was not half so fatigued as I was the day before, slept nine hours last night, and, except a little

* Near Wingham; then the residence of Mrs. Masters, but since her death completely taken down.

heaviness

heaviness occasioned by a thundering sky, I am perfectly well, and find no inconvenience from my walk.

Between dressing for church and the civil interruptions of messages and calls, I have but just time to make my most sincere acknowledgements to my Lord, Mrs. Talbot, and yourself, for the happiness I have lately enjoyed, and which I shall continue to enjoy as long as I have any power of recollection; to assure you that I consider the goodness you have all had for me as one of the most valuable blessings of my whole life, and that I am, with the most perfect esteem, respect, and gratitude, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's *June*, 5, 1753.

One line, dear Miss Carter, to thank you for your kind welcome Letter, and that must be all. We go on Friday, and to-day is packing-day, with a thousand engagements for the afternoon. I am writing in the parlour after dinner, good Mr. Benson

Benson at my elbow. Yesterday one of your notes came by chance in my way. You cannot imagine what an awkward disagreeable feel it gave me to see a parcel of words that said you would call on me in the afternoon, and to know you so far distant. But you are got home safe; you are not the worse for all the pleasure you have given, and all the good you have done us this last spring. You have got no fever by your long walk, and you found all well at home. Thank you a thousand times for so much good news.

I was told yesterday by a person whom I consulted on the head of duels, whose business it has kindly been ever since to gain information on that subject, that in spite of the rules of war it is now customary to break persons for refusing a challenge. On what authority? I asked. On the authority, I was told, of some clause there is against ungentlemanly behaviour. Perhaps it is now too late for you to notify this to the Adventurer, yet coming from so good a hand I could not help telling it you.

The Anti-marriage bill is got safe through the the House of Commons, 125 to 56. To-morrow it will be debated among the Lords. To-morrow we breakfast, my Lord and all, with the great Sir Thomas Robinson; Thursday is devoted to quiet and St. Paul's; Friday to dust; Saturday I hope

to

to see dear sweet Cuddesden. One word about Anthems *. We had that for which we are obliged to you, the day after you went; it was delightfully fine,

* The following Anthem is probably that to which Miss Talbot alludes. The first stanza is the same as in John Wesley's, and in Dr. Rippon's Collection; the rest is original, and it is subjoined here, as it has not been published before, unless it be still in use in the choir of St. Paul's

ANTHEM.

I.

Lo, He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favor'd sinners slain,
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumphs of his train.
Hallelujah. Amen.

II.

Through the wide creation sounding,
Hark! the trumpet's awful voice,
Guilt with shame and dread confounding,
Wakes the good to endless joys.

III.

Ransom'd from each tribe and nation,
Myriads rising in the air
Meet the Author of salvation,
And his glorious conquests share.

Swift

fine, though it lost much of its charms by your not being there. We had your favorite full Anthem of Weldon's two days ago in great perfection.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *June* 19.

Here we are, dear Miss Carter, breathing the dear delightful air of Oxfordshire, and all I wish for is that you would set yourself upon a pillion behind your brother Harry, and gallop hither to a little cottage about a quarter of an hour's walk from us, through the prettiest fields imagin-

IV.

Swift before his face retiring,
Sin with Pain and Sorrow flies;
Vanquish'd Time, and Death expiring,
See a happier world arise.

V.

Glory, honor, and thanksgiving
Ev'ry rescu'd spirit sings
To their Saviour ever living,
Lord of lords, and King of kings.

able.

able. It is untenanted, and stands in a sweet retired spot; a little clear brook runs by it, a flower-garden before it, a porch wined with honey-suckles, green hills rising before it that screen it from every eye; and then you and he might study Greek and Hebrew all the livelong day, and trip it up to us at sunset, and not one care of this world come near you.

We are all well, thank God, my mother particularly so, enjoying all the sweets and quiet of this place, which looks in high beauty. I live in the rose-bushes, and am as idle as the day is long. Next week Mrs. Berkeley and her Julia, a girl that you would love dearly if you knew her, are to stay with us. Mr. Richardson is delighted by your kind remembrance. The story in the Adventurer we are not to know till my Lord returns from his visitation. The previous allegory on Honor we are agreed is equal to any of Addison's. Pray make my most grateful acknowledgment to Dr. and Mrs. Carter for indulging me so long last spring in the company of a neighbour, who did me and all of us so much good.—My mother sends tender love to her daughter Betty.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 24, 1753.

I am extremely obliged to you, dear Miss Talbot, for letting me hear of you so soon, and am glad that your beloved Oxfordshire appears in a more agreeable view to you than my favorite walks of Kent have hitherto done to me. The sullen influence of an east wind has thrown a gloom over all our landscapes, and my rambles here have been tiresome and insipid. Perhaps my imagination may at present be in a state somewhat too delicate and refined to enjoy mere mortal fields and hedges, and to be sure I expected the country to look as beautiful as the Garden of Eden, to make me some amends for the happiness I lost in quitting the town.

Your cottage is extremely pretty, and so it is probable I might think it, if, instead of the poetical decorations in which your description has dressed it, it was surrounded with a ditch and shaded by nettles, while it is situated in the neighbourhood of people who have such a strange power of enchantment as to make one prefer the smoke of

St.

St. Paul's to the perfume of violets. In any other view I was never yet quite in such a tiff with this wicked world as to wish to run away from it, and renounce men, women, and children, to converse entirely with green fields and honeysuckles. My brother is at present, I fancy, much in the same way of thinking, and it would be very difficult to persuade him to retire to a hermitage, till he has deposited every farthing of the money he has acquired by learning the first book of Virgil by heart, with a set of strolling players, who are greatly the object of his admiration as well as of the whole place. It were much to be wished that the King and Parliament would take into consideration the lamentable case of those people who make a scruple of breaking the laws, and graciously allow some amusements to turn the heads of well-disposed misses in the country towns, as well as the fine ladies in London. Now here I, for instance, with all my passion for a show and a party, while my whole set of acquaintance are delighting themselves with the animation of Pigmalion's statue, am most grievously confined at home merely by the violence of an act of parliament.

I am glad Mr. Richardson took my Letter so kindly. You did me too much honour in ascribing his undoing to me. The poor man was more than three-quarters undone, by not seeing you before

you

you left London, and consequently (it is with sorrow I speak it) only a small fraction of his ruin can fairly be charged to my account. Unless, from an excess of charity, you are determined to put him out of his misery at once, it will be quite necessary for you to send him a reviving cordial, or it is impossible his heart should hold out till next winter; a circumstance by which, if it should happen to be a bad season for hearts, we shall both be sufferers, as you may be reduced to the necessity of playing tricks with the little tumbling man and your dormouse, and I to break all my arts of teizing against the impenetrable breast-plate of Mr. C.

How do you like the conduct of the story in the Adventurer? And are not you pleased with the Paper against Frolics? There is so much mischief done in the world by these gay excursions of folly, that I was mighty glad to see them so properly treated. I rejoice to hear my good mama is so particularly well; but, indeed, my quibbling sister, to tell me you live in the rose-bushes, does not appear to my wooden comprehension to be the plain, natural, and direct answer to a simple enquiry whether you had lost your cough. Be so good in your next to favour me with a reply intelligible to the lowest capacity. Your Letter ought to have been answered before, but I have been troubled with an

odd kind of trembling that has made me unfit for any thing.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *July* 21, 1753.

IT seems to me an age since I have writ to you, but really our guests take up so much of my time that I have done little but to attend to them. My Lord asks us every evening, "Well, ladies, what are you schemes for to morrow?" And these schemes engage generally the whole afternoon. Yesterday we set off soon after four, and did not return till near nine. Our road lay through a most pleasant country, with great variety of delightful views on every side, and brought us to a clump of elms on a hill, from whence there is one of the most pleasing prospects imaginable. A silver river winding very gently through meadows of the softest green, on the nearer side a mixture of woody banks and grassy slopes, covered with flocks and herds, and on the farther a cultivated cheerful country rising by degrees; one end of the view is termi-

terminated by the spires and domes of Oxford, and on the other rises among the woods a handsome town and church. From this place we wandered through various pretty fields to a fisherman's hut by the side of the river, where we drank tea very comfortably. In the coach we amused ourselves with some of the seventh volume of Mad. de Sevignés' Letters, and some of Mrs. Fielding's. 'Tis vexatious in the last-named book to find such a mixture of refinement *a perte de vue* proceeding from her inclination to support, I fancy, a false system, and deduce every variety of action from the sources of pride and vanity. But where she writes naturally one loves and honours her extremely; there is a goodness of heart and a delicacy of sentiment that makes me think you happy in her acquaintance. I scarce know a greater pleasure than reading over a book one is fond of with persons of taste and candour, to whom it is entirely new. A great deal of this pleasure I have had lately. Mrs. Rowe's excellent works were an undiscovered treasure to Mrs. Berkeley, and she values them as they deserve. We read one night a certain Vision in the Rambler, that I saw fixed their whole attention; and if any person would have been pleased to fix the attention of Sir Charles Grandison, when he was about eighteen, they need not be mortified at engaging Mr. Berkeley's. How-

ever, by a sort of mauvaise honte among us, Mr. Johnson went away with the whole honour.

The Adventurers go on incomparably whenever some pert letter of the alphabet * does not intrude, and even they are better than the every day papers of the World. Lord Chesterfield now and then throws in a sheet of wit, of which I wish he would sometimes bestow a little on the graver Adventurer. But it must be genuine spontaneous wit, for what is writ in cold blood degenerates into pertness, so that persons whose turn it is naturally to write in a serious way should never, I believe, *de propos deliberé*, aim at a lively one. A cow is a much nobler animal than a *rope-dancer*, but a *cow dancing* is proverbial.

Thank you for preserving your own integrity, and confirming mine in the article of lawless stage plays. We have a whole company of strollers within a mile of us. Send me next time an antidote against bribery and corruption, for I feel myself strongly disposed to them, in a country place, where gratitude for disinterested kindness finds no place, even among children of four years old. A very good country for all that, and very good little

* The writers in the Adventurer, besides Dr. Hawkesworth, were Dr. Johnson, whose papers are marked with a *T.*; Dr. Joseph Warton, Mr. Bonnell Thornton, and some others occasionally.

brats.

brats. I have just been prattling with a parcel of them, or the idea would not have come into my head. No idea stays in it long together, 'tis such a galloping disjointed kind of life we lead, but a very cheerful and a very healthy one. This Letter was begun two days ago; I have since dispatched a Note to Mr. Richardson, and a Letter to the Duchess of Somerset, that were of immediate necessity. It was not our Duchess that had the accident of the overturn you have seen mentioned in the Papers; but, alas! she herself is far from well. Every trial serves to throw a new lustre on the character of that amiable woman. I must transcribe for you a passage out of her last Letter to me, because I think it will give you more pleasure than pain. "I hope ease will come when God sees it best for me, and (if I know my own heart) I would not desire it one moment sooner; all I dare presume to pray for is, that he will grant me patience to bear his visitation as I ought, and to sanctify it to me."

Do let me know that you are no longer among the *quakers*. That odd kind of trembling that prevented your writing has made me very uneasy. Pray can you guess what the "Free Enquirer" means by his Miss T— and Miss C—. Adieu! dear sister, all happiness attend you, your mama sends her blessing.

MRS.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 30, 1753.

I REJOICE, dear Miss Talbot, to hear of the health and spirits of all my good friends at Cuddesden. And delight in all your schemes, your rides, your prospects, your tea drinkings by the river side. These are parties very different from those which engage some of the good gentlefolks in this place, who delight themselves during fine summer afternoons with the pastime of a commerce table. I have just now quitted a very happy vociferous party, who will suffer nothing by the loss of my company, for I have always been lucky enough to keep out of the circles, and withdrew to a window, where with great tranquillity I exercised the art and mystery of plain work, and enjoy the comfortable privilege of being as silent as I please. That you may not think however that I am entirely confined to an observation on the amusements of others in which I have no joy myself, I had yesterday an expedition of my own, extremely delightful to one who is fond of every view of nature, from the soft landscapes of a vernal morning, to the awful beauty of a stormy sky.

My

My solitary walk of about two miles was entertained by a charming variety of thunder, rain, and wind, mixed with some intervals of sunshine. In the midst of my enjoyment of this uproar of the elements, I thought with much charitable compassion on poor helpless folks who ride in coaches, and who never venture to walk out except in what is called fine weather. But while I was congratulating myself upon a freedom from the restraints and false delicacies of the higher walks of life: some gleaners whom I met, driven by the rain out of the harvest field, gave me great reason to be thankful for not being placed in the lowest. For it seemed very evident, from the appearance of these poor dripping people, that those varieties of the elements, which afford so much pleasure to a vacant philosophical speculatist, or poetic enthusiast, may make a very different impression on such as are exposed to their severity by necessity, and withheld from an attention to their beauties by laborious employment. At the end of my walk I spent a very agreeable day with my friends; and returned home about ten in a fine calm moon-light night, a little disconcerted however with the reflection, that in a world, with which I was much inclined to be pleased, it should have been found improper for me to return alone, and that when the sun was set I must not travel without a guard;

and

and I could not help considering the poor man who was obliged to trudge after me, in the same uncomfortable light, as I always look upon a lock, or a bolt, as a most severe satire upon mankind.

Has Lady Mary Gregory told you she intended coming to Deal to bathe in the sea? I have had several Letters from her, and had taken lodgings for her, and the servants were arrived, but something has happened to alter her plans, for this day the servants return to London.

Ay that's true. What could the Free Enquirer mean? Do not be angry with me, but I could not help laughing at that paper. Seriously however if I was in the place of Miss C—: the hearty impertinence of it would give me no other concern than upon the account of Miss T—. After all I do not believe but that the author must certainly mean you, for I have just now been informed, from very good authority, that you have a most Amazonian spirit, and have done more harm to the old interest in Oxfordshire than a dozen men. Of what excellent use would such a champion be to our two candidates in Kent. They cannot, I think, do a better thing, than make a treat of cold mutton bones, and bribe you to come here. Do you know who this Free Enquirer is? Indeed I cannot help thinking in your zeal for the principal Adventurer, you are a little too severe upon the rest. Surely

you

you will say at least something to the letter Y. I long to know what you think of that story. The "World" I have never seen since I left London.

I am much obliged to you for the excellent transcript from the Duchess of Somerset's Letter. I wish you may soon receive one, filled with the same noble sentiments of gratitude for ease and health, as the other was of resignation under pain. My *quakerish* complaints are gone, I am one of those never in danger. Pray take care of yourself. Sleep a vast deal. Eat frumenty, and endeavour to get fat, for I am afraid the person who described you as a vixen, spoke more truth in the account he gave of your looks. Did the Bishop of London give his vote or interest against the Jew Bill?

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Sept.* 8, 1753.

The Bishop of Oxford has given me a large parcel for you, consisting of your translation, his own excellent remarks, some of Mr. Harris's *, and

* Father to the Earl of Malmesbury; a deep scholar as well as philosopher, who kindly answered several queries from Mrs.

and a Letter from Mr. C. Yorke; I have packed them all safely and forwarded them to Deal. And now let me talk a little wisdom about this book. I think I am not unwise in very much setting my heart upon seeing it compleated and ready to make its public appearance in the world as soon as possible. It will do the world a great deal of good, and you a great deal of credit, while I shall have the secret satisfaction of attributing to your kindness for me, your first undertaking so valuable and excellent a performance. Let me know, my dear Miss Carter, as soon as you can, that you will set about this best employment, that at present you can be engaged in with a cheerful spirit, and that you have conjured up no lions and bears in the way to fright yourself. The Bishop of Oxford has been hard at work for you, you are bound in honour to work as hard for him, and pray let me soon have a Letter of queries for Mr. Harris. When this main matter is done, it will perhaps be time enough to think of some kind of prefatory discourse, for the information of us uninformed readers, giving such accounts as can be best collected of the life and character of Epictetus, and the plan of the stoick philosophy, in doing which, or in your notes,

Mrs. Carter respecting the difficultics which attended the translation; and likewise sent her some valuable observations concerning it.

you

you will have good opportunities to mark out those points in which it is false, wild, and defective, and to draw comparisons between that and, the only true philosophy, the Christian.

I am a pretty creature to write about philosophy indeed! When the spirit of party is going to hurry me away next week, to appear with Lady Parker at the Chipping Norton races, where in the spirit of giddy gaiety I must think of nothing but dances and dresses, and such idlenesses for three or four days. And this, though we have after that but one week to remain in dear Oxfordshire, and though our days here pass too pleasantly to want any foreign enlivening. Most enlivening country scenes, charming weather, agreeable companions, and every evening an hour's reading en famille of Sir C. Grandison. All this must I leave for a horse race! All this must I leave in October for an empty town! But its emptiness is my joy. There at least I shall have leisure, and as I mean to carry up health with me to improve that leisure, which is really to enjoy it, I must not and will not complain.

I have found out the wicked man from whom your sister learnt that I talked like a vixen, and looked like a witch. But even he acknowledges my looks to be mended. As for my political conduct—And yet it really vexed me even in joke, and

in

in his very good natured and humourous way, to have it supposed that I could assume the impertinence of a party lady. But I am sure you did not suspect me.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, Sept. 21, 1753.

It gave me great satisfaction to hear of the engagements that prevented my having the pleasure of hearing from you. I hope you have had a full and perfect enjoyment of this beautiful September moon, and calm unclouded skies. But why do I talk about autumnal moons and unruffled skies to you whose attentions are fixed on the terrestrial lustre of an assembly room, and who can have no idea of the refined pleasures of being draggled to the neck by wandering with elves and fairies over the dewy green, while you are in the bustling spirit of this world, plaguing the hearts and engaging the votes of mere mortal freeholders. In this notable scheme I heartily wish you good success, and care not how much harm you do to the old interest, nor how many squires you talk into breaking their hearts,

hearts, and saving their necks; provided that after all this fatigue you bring a good stock of health from your Chipping Norton races, sufficient to satisfy the unreasonable demands of me and Mr. ——. I insist upon your not getting your cough at the races; if you lose your heart that is your own concern.

This has been begun these ten days, but a succession of family illness has prevented my finishing it; at present, thank God, both my father and sister are better, and my own wearied head and spirits allow me to thank you for the kind intelligence of your having come off so quietly from an election riot, but people may sometimes be hurt who neither drink nor huzza, and I fear you have not yet quite recovered the hurry. St. Paul's, and sweet Mr. Mence have, I hope, by this time composed your spirits, and I long to hear how well you are enjoying the leisure you flattered yourself with; and I hope a few of your leisure hours will be bestowed on that most excellent green book which I so sincerely wish to have the world the better for. Indeed did St. Paul's furnish such walks, and rides, and *green* air, (an admirable phrase of Mrs. Talbot's) as the environs of Caddesden, I would not say a word about pen and ink.

Mr. Richardson has been so good as to send me four volumes of his most charming work, and I heartily

heartily wish, for his sake as well as their own, that all the world may be as fond of it as I am. Every body, I am sure, will be struck with the advantageous difference of the language, though but few can observe it with the peculiar pleasure that I do *. But should not you have interposed a little in behalf of poor dear Charlotte Grandison (do not you love her extremely) should she have been thrown away upon that fly-catching Lord, who would have been just as happy with aunt Nell? However, if the man in his passionate fits does not absolutely break the harpsichord, she is in no great danger of breaking her heart. How inimitably are all the characters supported, what an original, what a masterpiece is Clementina! But there would be no end to one's admiration of the whole.

I have looked over but very little of Epictetus, and as to any lions or bears which my own imagination may have conjured up against this undertaking, I am determined, most heroically, to knock them all on the head. Letter Z, I am told in the Adventurer, is Dr. Warton the translator of the Georgics †. Some people might be employed now

* There is great reason therefore to suppose that this work had passed through Miss Talbot's hands before it was printed, and been corrected by her.

† This was acknowledged by Dr. Hawkesworth in the last number.

I believe

I believe without suspicion, as Letters are now transmitted to the Adventurer he knows not from whom.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Percy Lodge, *Nov.* 12, 1753.

You will, I am sure, be pleased to see the date of this, though I am ashamed of one half of it, but the evil spirit of routing over old boxes of papers possessed me, and I could not make up my mind to write even to you. My Lord and my mother brought me here six days ago, and here they kindly left me yesterday to spend, I hope, a fortnight. The hope is not an undutiful one, for my mother is always best pleased when I am in the place that is best for me, and my Lord, you know, never wants any body. But now I talk of dutifulness, I do think mama's daughter Betty ought to take a post-chaise in all haste and come to town to take care of her, as she did so well last April; a fie upon me and my old papers, that I did not think of making the stipulation beforehand. Could I but

I but have penned a cough, and told you how necessary it was for me to come for a while to this seat of health, peace, and cheerfulness, the argument would have been irresistible. And pray tell me, dear Miss Carter—am I going to say a very wicked thing—or may I flatter myself that you will think of London again early in the spring? If I must not flatter myself, I will not, nor shall you be teazed.

We have just begun Sir C. Grandison here, and every body is delighted with it, we are not come to Charlotte yet. I do love her as well as you do, but I do not think you speak with sufficient respect of Lord G., and her ladyship richly deserved two or three hearty beatings and kickings, which the Bishop of Oxford did most heartily wish her. Yet as much as for many things I love and revere Miss Howe, I do think Lady G's. character much more excusable, and less likely to do harm in the world than her's. More excusable, because Charlotte might through mere giddiness have taken up wrong notions of courtship and matrimony, but Miss Howe must act against her own knowledge and conviction in every instance of teizing pertness to her mother. More harmless, because perverse children may give great distress to fond parents, but saucy wives will be sure-enough to make cross husbands, and meet with due correction.

What

What shall I answer to your enquiries about the green book? I have remembered my promise faithfully—but am just as far from performing it as I was last year. I have read it carefully, but can find no order, no connection in it. It wants an introduction—so it is returned to the *considering drawer*, with many of its ancestors. I attempted once or twice to ask questions about it, but being referred to some other time, that other time has never yet come. Two or three times, like poor Mr. Singleton, I have opened my mouth, but my words like his were not ready. The other papers, your's and all, lie in the same hopeless condition. But if I gain great strength, spirits, courage, and diligence, in this happy retreat from every care and every interruption, you may possibly hear a better account of me and them. Here I enjoy leisure to my heart's wish, though eight hours sleep makes a great gap in the scanty twenty-four, and of these near seven are spent in cheerful company, and two others in delightful airings.

Pray be so good as to consider a point for me that I cannot settle to my own satisfaction perfectly, and not at all to any body's else. Every body that has read but a little way in the book, accuses Harriet of vanity. Is it vanity to repeat out of frank-heartedness, praises that she despises? Is

it vanity for a woman of sense and principles to think herself superior to men foolish and profligate, and not to accept with a low curtsey the first that does her the honour to offer himself? And why such an outcry at her number of lovers? Is there a housemaid, be she ever so homely, that might not, if she would, talk to her Lucy of half a dozen sweethearts? Were half a dozen Sir Charles's to adore her, there might be a vanity in talking of it, but the Grevilles, the Fenwicks, the Hargraves, are no cause of boasting surely. Yet, between you and me, is there not a spice of this sort of vanity in every female heart of us all? And why? Because it is instilled into us from the very nursery, where we are told to *hold up our heads for there is money bid for us;* and partly, to own a mortifying truth, few girls can become of any consideration in the world, but from the proper regard paid to them by some one *of the condescending Lords of the creation.* I shall write, like Charlotte, by and by. But I am a little of uncle Selby's mind. No rule without an exception. But do now write me an essay upon this sort of vanity, and its too frequent consequence coquetry. Not the art of coquetry like Mrs. Lenox, but an edifying essay proper to be put into the hands of Misses. And I will try my own Miss-ship by it,

and

and from both, form some rules for my daughter Julia, who is just on the brink of putting on a Mantuan.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Dec.* 10, 1753.

It is to be hoped my Lord and Mrs. Talbot will not think of sending for you from Percy Lodge till all the old boxes and papers are burnt and their ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven. And so these vile papers harassed you to death; a truly evil spirit it was, the only one by which I ever knew you possessed; and it cruelly caused the vexatious neglect of my favourite point, the green book; but it is really intolerable of you not to let the world be somewhat the better for you.

I hope my good mama has been too well and too much amused to miss her insignificant daughter Betty. However, want me or no, had I been worth a Hippogriph in the world, I should certainly have flown to see her. You are very kind to think about my coming to town, but I fear I

must not for a moment flatter myself with such an idea this year.

Sir Charles Grandison is really a charming book. I cannot see any reason for accusing Harriet of vanity about her lovers, she is writing to her own circle, to people interested in every little circumstance, and what would be absurd and ridiculous, nay, even impertinent in a visiting room, may be very right and proper in a private family correspondence. The great charge against poor Harriet here, is the discovery that she makes to so many people, of the state of her heart with regard to Sir Charles. A character of so much simplicity and frankness is so seldom to be met with in the world, that there is no wonder it should be liable to be misunderstood. Surely if all the occasions on which they make this discovery are considered, there is much more reason to admire her generosity and love of truth, than to censure her for indiscretion and folly. I have read only four volumes, and know nothing of the catastrophe, but I am persuaded Mr. Richardson will think even a Sir Charles Grandison too inconsiderable a reward for Clementina, who like Clarissa, can be properly recompensed by nothing less than heaven.

I have been much harassed of late by the returned illness of both my father and sister, which has made me neglect my proper exercise, and the

consequence

consequence of this has been an almost uninterrupted headach, so bad as to make me utterly incapable of application; poor Epictetus is therefore at a stand. I am at length grown so weary of confusion and stupidity, that I have summoned up a gallant resolution of walking as if I was bewitched, and actually have begun to put it in execution for these last three days, and find myself the better for it, so I hope I shall have the grace to persevere, though after long inactivity it is a scheme that requires some fortitude to effect.

As good a judge as I may be of the power of vanity in any other respect, no body can be worse qualified to write an essay on that particular species of it which you describe; for whereas the other misses of this world are told to *hold up their heads*, I was always encouraged to hang mine down; I cannot exactly trace from whence I derived some odd notions upon this subject; possibly my mother, from observing the little propriety and decorum with which affairs of gallantry are usually conducted in such kind of places as this, might be particularly careful to give my thoughts a different turn. Whatever might be the reason, I can perfectly well remember that when I was about ten years old, I looked upon having a *sweetheart* with as much horror as if it had been one of the seven deadly sins; and when I had heard that my favo-

rite

rite playfellow was actually guilty of it, I was so shocked at the atrocity of the thing, that if, in consequence of a most profound and wise lecture, she had not flatly denied the charge, I know not whether we had ever rompt together again. Notwithstanding all this however, a certain share of vanity I have, but then it is merely the vanity of a human creature; and as it is not so confined as that which you affirm to be in every female heart, may perhaps be so much the worse.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's Deanery, *Jan.* 19, 1754.

What an age it seems since I writ to my dear Miss Carter, can she forgive me? I am the more inexcusable because whenever I have the least right to expect a Letter from her I am apt to be impatient for it: but let her delay an answer ever so long, I never suspect her of having forgot her friends, and am only afraid lest she or some of those she loves are ill. She on the contrary will I fear do me no very great injustice if she imagines me liable to be too much engrossed, and dissipated by the present

present scene, be it what it will—Come to London therefore and make one of the present scene, or you see I am on the brink of absolutely forgetting you.

To be sure I writ that last part of my sentence with one of Charlotte G.'s wicked pens! How could I else speak with such levity on a subject that often makes me seriously uneasy! You who are too partial to me, ought to be told of my faults, and to justify your partiality you must teach me how to mend them. I tell you honestly that the present scene has always too strong an influence upon my mind, and that when various little avocations call upon me for my attention, distant objects grow fainter than they ought to do. Not that I love or value my long absent friends less than in the instant when I parted with them, but I think of them seldomer than if I saw them every day, or than if I lived in a solitude and saw nobody. This cannot I think be called inconstancy, but it is a wretched narrowness of mind; a sort of short-sightedness that can take in but two or three objects at a time, and those held very near. Do you at all comprehend what I mean? No, because you are incapable of feeling the same thing—May be not, for when you was in London did not you love us all mightily, and like staying on here very tolerably well? Yet now you are at Deal chained down by the enchantment of

nearer

nearer objects, you cannot bear the thoughts of coming amongst us again. Well then, I am not so much worse than you as I imagined. Nevertheless I love and honour you, and do not like myself by any means. And now you have the whole truth. I am very well in health, thank God, but extremely low spirited this winter, the effect, I suppose in some degree, of last year's harassings. Strange that the effect should last so much longer than the cause! I am grievously out of conceit of myself. I have just leisure enough here, now and then, to snatch a glimpse of my faults, but not to set about mending them effectually. Yet in the midst of this I am forced to sit down gravely and write advice and admonition to some or other of *my children*, that boxes my own ears insufferably the while.

Do not you think in the retirement of St. Paul's I am very absurd to complain of want of leisure? So I should be, if my mornings were good for any thing, but I never rise till seven, and then so sleepy and languid that I do nothing to any purpose. Now, as I cannot be absolutely sure whether this sort of saunteringness is from any unavoidable infirmity, or faulty indolence, I am always unhappy about it. Were I sure it was the first, I would patiently amuse away the time till it was over, and till my mind returned to its former alacrity. Or could

could I convict myself of indolence, I would set heartily to work to conquer it, and not allow myself one minute's relaxation. Forgive my running on upon such a selfish subject, I would give you a true sketch of my disposition, in hopes of your helping hand to raise me out of this *slough of Despond*.

I spent a most happy and peaceable six weeks at Percy Lodge, though not in better spirits than I have just been describing, and many a morning hour did I spend upon the "Grand Cyrus," because I was fit for nothing else. I sincerely think there is not in the world a better or more amiable woman than the Duchess of Somerset. I write to her once a fortnight, and to my Julia once a week, and now I am to equip her with womanly apparel, so this will account for some of my time. I can really not find any for the green book at present, but it is not out of my mind, and I have even put down some hints for future use. As for our friend the Adventurer, the only thing he wants is a few papers of lively and diverting humour. Letter A used to write such in the beginning, what is become of him? Flavilla's story is most universally admired. Is it Mr. H—'s? or whose?

What particular fault do you think I have heard found by some top beaux esprits with Sir Charles? That the language is low, stiff, and vulgar, and much

much worse than Clarissa. We have met Mr. Browne * several times in company, and find him a most amiable man and excellent company; he, the Bishop of Norwich, Mr. Wrey, and many others, always enquire very much after you. I have lately spent a week at Moore Park with Lady Anson. The place is wonderfully fine and beautiful, the company always agreeable. This poor Letter has so long been delayed on its journey that I am quite ashamed of it, but will do better next time, and that, as Sir Rowland says, for the following reasons.

Because since I began this the tar-water has mended my spirits, and I am not half so indolent, and good for nothing as I was.

Because in the same interim Julia is almost equipped, and mercers and milliners will eat up no more of my time.

And because your forgiveness will be so generous, and your answer so much speedier than I have deserved, that I shall be doubly bound not to trespass on your goodness again.

And lastly, because that same fit of stupidity and uncomfortableness being over, I feel myself more than ever, dear Miss Carter, &c.

* Author of the celebrated poem, "de animi immortalitate," and father to the present J. H. Browne, Esq. M. P.

Mrs.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Canterbury, *Feb.* 14, 1754.

YES indeed it was a perfect age since I had heard from you, but I saw too much of your London embarrassments last year to be much surprized, and I flattered myself that you often thought on me, though you had not a quarter of an hour to write to me. But, alas! this reasonable way of thinking, by which I made myself easy, and apologized for you, and of which I was extremely vain, had no foundation in truth; you have neither been well nor happy, nor have you troubled your head about me. Of this last article, however, I acquit you, and can easily comprehend that people may pay their absent friends all the attention they can reasonably expect, without suffering them to interrupt a stronger and more necessary application to the present scene of business. It would be exacting a strangely extravagant proof of constancy in one's friends, to insist on their being deaf and blind to the objects which surround them, and to expect them to quit the realities of action, to ramble after imaginary *entretiens*, and bewilder themselves in the

the land of romance, the country which properly belongs (poor souls!) to none but lovers.

But the low spiritedness, my dear Miss Talbot, of which you complain, assures me you cannot be well, nor ever will be, while you have the strange imagination, that a weak system of nerves is a moral defect, and to be cured by reason and argument. As your confessor, by way of penance for your faulty impatience at unavoidable infirmity, I must enjoin you for two months to amuse yourself, and to wile away the time, and to be as trifling and insignificant, and as much like other people as ever you can, and never once during that time to apply yourself to any thing that requires close attention. O dear, O dear, that I could but teach you a little folly, the only science in which I am capable of instructing you, and the only one in which I should find you a dull and untoward scholar. But though you have very little natural genius, as industry will sometimes get tolerable lengths without parts, I am persuaded that by an honest application of your faculties, such as they are, you might in time arrive at a degree of trifling and amusement, very little wiser than what forms the business and importance of the wise folks of this world.

As I know you think idleness mighty good for other people, you will be glad to hear that I have been

been five weeks at Canterbury, having come only with the intention of spending a few days at the Deanery, Miss Hall would not hear of it, so seized me, and here I am. I hope, however, to be at Deal in a few days, for this life of *fainéantise*, however it may suit my inclination, does extremely hurt my conscience. I have done no one earthly thing but flutter and racket, and play the fool, ever since I came here, all which perhaps I might have been mighty easy about, if I did not take it into my head that I was of some little importance at home; and whenever there seems something more necessary to be done than the thing one is about, there is no possibility of being easy. If it was not for this unlucky consideration, my time here would pass very agreeably; all I want is, what is not to be acquired here, a few hours more leisure. Indeed the life of London is quiet and leisure, compared to this place.

You will be vexed and mortified to hear that though Sir Charles and Clementina have many admirers, nobody will like, and very few even tolerate, Miss Byron. Miss Hall seems to be her only advocate, and I quarrel with her a little for preferring her to Clementina. The Italian story is generally and extremely admired, and better liked than any part of the book. The courtship between

Sir

Sir Charles and Miss Byron is very much laughed at, even by those who are best pleased with the book. The language is as much censured here as among your tip-top *beau esprits* in London; this, however, is by no means a general charge. I wish, however, in the next edition, Mr. Richardson would leave out the grievous old-fashioned word *kinswoman*.

Did you ever read a little French book called *Theorie des Sentimens Agréables?* And what is your opinion of it? I have some curiosity about it, from hearing a very ingenious and good kind of man say it always made him form resolutions of amendment. I have been much pleased lately with the honesty of a Frenchman, who after having composed an opera, which was admired by all the world at Paris, has just writ a little treatise, to prove that the French language is absolutely *incapable d'une bonne musique*. His countrymen are outrageous at an assertion, which all but themselves are convinced is extremely true. I think they have proceeded so far as to hang him in effigy.

You do not tell me a word about sundry new tragedies, which I hear have appeared this winter. I have seen only Boadicea, which very little pleased me. I know not what is become of letter A, nor have I seen an Adventurer since I came here.

You

You have often, I believe, heard me mention Mr. Ward * as one of my great favourites. He is just come from abroad, and has been some weeks with Mrs. Rooke. I had formerly spent many very agreeable hours with him in London, and could not help finding a great deal of pleasure in seeing him returned after a six years' absence without any one foreign foppery, and with the same appearance of goodness he carried out.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Deanery, *March* 16, 1754.

Fie upon you, Miss Carter! I write in the very spirit of controversy, and to support the deserted (and therefore more meritorious) party of good Miss Hall. Harriet Byron inferior to Clementina! her own humility might make her think so, and the very thought made her superior. She *insipid*, forsooth! why so are most of the valuable

* Afterwards Lord Dudley; elder brother (by another mother) to the present Viscount. He was nephew to Mrs. Rooke, and succeeded to her estate in Kent.

characters

characters that pass through this world without being called forth to any very great trials. She is reasonable—therefore she does not engage attention by the wildness of an amiably disordered mind; she is uniformly discreet, and therefore does not amuse with the giddy flights of a random Charlotte. She is dutiful and affectionate to her parents and friends—there the fine folks, that hate a country cousin as they do a cat, think her vulgar and precise. She is honest and obedient, open and undisguised, therefore people given to fib genteelly, and dissemble affectedly, call her vain and talkative. She is not like your Canterbury *coquettes* to be sure, and she had once a strange aversion to that Canterbury. Aye, that's the thing which has set you all so much against her, and I suppose you are a little piqued at Sir Charles himself, that he could make so many journies thither, and not once look in at the assembly. Well, arguing signifies nothing, so I shall spend no more of my ink to convince you, nor shall I name the subject again in any circle this wise town affords. One evening I lost an hour's delightful music, by debating the point of duelling with some young men, one of whom has since told me, he is convinced that a challenged man can no more help fighting than he can a fit of illness. Another time I gravely argued for half an hour, on the uncandidness of disliking

and throwing aside such a book, on casually dipping into the midst of it, to the emolument only of a knot of my friends in a very large assembly, who stood laughing to see me employ so much eloquence on a poor man, who had evidently dined in *too* good company to be able to get out his own words without hesitation. Nor could I in a morning discourse with a grave and witty man persuade him, that any one thing in this wise and virtuous age stood in need of the least reformation, or that card-playing on Sundays was not much more harmless than conversation. In vain did I endeavour to convince a woman of principle, sense, and virtue, that a rake was not the most edifying father and most worthy friend. In vain have I, in every company, done honour to the Adventurer, by naming numbers of the most acknowledged taste, even in the fine world, who constantly read and admire them. Mr. Dodsley prevails, and the Adventurer will soon cease his delightful instructions. I believe I shall leave town for a week, but my Lord is not yet determined where. You do not like Boadicea. Pray why? Is it not according to all rules very faultless? Is not Venusia's character amiable, Dumnorix's noble, and the distress of both, in the last act especially, affecting to the highest degree? But you have the town with you. "Theorie des Sentimens Agréables" I have read

some years ago, and quite forget. It made no deep impression upon me, but that may be my fault. I do not like the translation of Mr. Brown's Poem at all, but I do the last volume of Sir Charles. Send me your particular opinions of this volume. If they do not agree with mine, expect the second part of this libel. I have been writing so many Letters, that it is doubtful whether I shall not apply for the vacant place of secretary of state.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *March* 18, 1754.

Where are you, my dear Miss Talbot, in this most dreary weather? As it seemed indifferent to my Lord whither you went, provided you went somewhere, it is a pity he has not sent you to visit the Ruins of Rome, or the Pyramids of Egypt, or, in short, to some country or other enlivened by gay sunshine and vernal prospects. I am really in some pain for my Lord and you, when I fancy you travelling through trackless desarts of snow, and shall be heartily glad to hear you are both safe at St. Paul's again.

And

And so really you are such a heroine in controversy as to set up an imaginary antagonist, and then knock the poor thing down by the very weapons she has been using to combat others in defence of your own cause; for who has reasoned and wrangled more about Miss Byron than I have? But you and Miss Mulso are both arrant enthusiasts, and because in the spirit of moderation I call her one of the best sort of plain practical mortals, you both cry out that I am an enemy, for looking with a superior degree of reverence upon Clementina as a saint and a martyr. What shall I say about the last volume? If I am not in raptures you threaten me with a libel. However, upon the whole, I am charmed almost as much with it as you can be, though we may differ in particulars. Shall I venture to tell you what I have yet told nobody else, though the love of truth has sometimes almost extorted it from me, that in general I like Clarissa best *. Perhaps the reason may be, that one's attention is more kept awake by a quick succession of very interesting events than by mere conversations, however improving and excellent they may be. Mrs. Shirley's and Lady G.'s about love, in the last volume, are admirable.

* Mrs. Carter's opinion has been since sufficiently proved to be just by general suffrage.

You do not tell me a word about "The Friends," which I have not yet read, nor "The Admonitions," which I have read, and which, except in some few instances, I am so much pleased with, that I have a great curiosity to know who is the supposed writer. I am vexed and mortified to hear that the Adventurer is at an end. What an idea must it give one of the public taste, to find such a Paper sunk for want of encouragement. To be sure the fine folks of this world are as sagacious in finding out the formidable genius of instruction however beautifully disguised, and run away from it with as much horror as good people do from a cloven foot. I have been equally unsuccessful in my preachings; perhaps you will not think that very marvellous, as well for other reasons, as that I bestowed the greatest part of my labour upon a wit and a fine lady, whom I never could persuade that it was possible people might have great merit, and be very valuable members of society, without any of the glittering accomplishments of a scholar, a genius, or a rake. With all my rhetoric I could never talk her into the least degree of charity for well-meaning dull folks; and all the honour I acquired by my elaborate dissertations was to be considered as the patroness of stupidity, and named for the president of the humdrum club. This was a vexatious consequence of my endeavours with a person, who,

who, in spite of all her extravagancies, has so much sense, and so much good-nature, and so much merit, that her good opinion would have very much flatttered my ambition. I have not seen the translation of Mr. Browne's Poems; it is vexatious they should not be well done. Mrs. Browne wanted me to undertake it, but I could as soon have built a house. I did, however, make some notes and observations upon it, but they were nothing worth. Have you seen Metastasio's song "Ecco quel fiero istante," &c.*

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's *April*, 4, 1754.

I must write to you once more, dear Miss Carter, before franks become useless; but do not, I beseech you, let that consideration delay your answer—nor shall it my reply, if I have any thing to say that is worth three-pence.

* Which Mrs. Carter afterwards translated.

Your

Your compliments to Mr. Harris I conveyed through Mr. Yorke, who desires me to say, is himself one of your most devoted humble servants. I believe Clarissa *is* a work of higher genius than Sir Charles; yet I do love Sir Charles, and I *admire* Harriet too, gentle and reasonable though she be, and prefer her infinitely to Clementina. Tell me how do you like that discourse upon love and marriage at Shirley Manor? In spite of my heart, I do think it to be *fort bien raisonnée*, and so unanswerable that *dans le cas* I am convinced I should act upon it. And there may be many cases in life, in which those sorts of reasonings ought to determine one's conduct, and in which, situations should be preferred that are not one's first passion, because upon the whole they are most eligible. What put it into my head to say this just now? A very trifle, an absolute nothing I believe; but I will tell you honestly what it is. A person asked me the other day if I had heard any thing of your being likely to be offered a place about the Princess's children? I said, I thought it unlikely such an offer should be made, and too likely if it were that you should refuse it. But I beg and entreat of you, my dear friend, if such an offer should be made, not to refuse it. At least take time enough to consider it well first, and to write your objections to us. I think you could make none that I could not unanswerably

swerably answer. No situation in life (absolutely none) is free from its trials, its disquietudes, its confinements. Those which are habitual to us we do not or will not feel; those that are untried appear generally in too strong a light. And where Providence gives the call to a more extensive usefulness, private considerations should always give way. I believe I am now again fighting with an idle chimera, and arguing seriously on a question that had no foundation. Forgive me, you know my heart, and you know your own share in it.

I go out of town with the Duchess of Somerset on Saturday for ten days or a fortnight. These frequent country excursions do me a great deal of good. I never saw the song you mention of Metastasio's, but should wish you to send it if you can.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT*.

Deal, *April* 16, 1752.

To be sure you will think me downright mad to talk so much from a single hint in your Letter. But the day before I had one from another of my friends, in which the very same scheme was mentioned as coming from a *courtier*, who said that it arose from a strong recommendation made by the Bishop of Oxford to the Princess. From this last circumstance, as I had never heard you mention it, I hoped the whole had no foundation; however, the person who gave me this account, seemed to treat it as truth, and added to it the kindest offers of strengthening the application, if it was a scheme agreeable to my wishes. I was to answer the Letter by return of Post, which I did, and not recollecting to have heard my Lord give the least hint of such a thing, declared an utter dislike to a way of life, for which I do not apprehend I have any one talent.

After all I hope this will prove a mere chimera,

* The beginning of this Letter is printed in page 124 of the Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, 4to, edition, and is therefore omitted here.

if

if it should not, I will be determined by my father. If his inclination should be greatly for it, strongly as the scheme is on all accounts my dislike and terror, I have too many peculiar obligations to him not to endeavor to accommodate my mind to it, if he does not see any force in my objections. Tell me, dear Miss Talbot, is there not something in them? Or am I too confused and cloudy to explain my own meaning? In one respect at least my senses are perfectly awake, that I feel the utmost gratitude for the kind concern you are so good as to express about me, and that I am heartily vexed whenever I find myself so perverse as to differ from your opinion. Remember you are to write whenever you have any thing to say that is worth three-pence, and what is there that you can say, which in my opinon will not be worth much more, were it even to chide me!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *June*, 10, 1754.

Imagine, dear Miss Carter, that the Post has secreted two or three Letters at least since the date of your last, and save me from the shame of making excuses. Perhaps one reason why I have not answered it, was that it was more unanswerable than I could wish. In some points I cannot by any means agree with you, but what you say of your health has, alas, too much force, and I cannot wish what I think might prove a national benefit and blessing at the expence of your peace and ease. In all such cases you ought to judge for yourself, but if ever the case should happen, let me hear from you however before any absolute determination is made.

We returned here after an absence of eight months, and find this place very green, very pretty, and very retired, for it happens we have scarcely a neighbour in the country. Here we shall probably stay till near Christmas; my lord by keeping a double residence avoids the disagreeable necessity of returning in October. In these six months I hope to recover an alacrity of spirits, without which

which one is nothing worth. I have according to my promise last year taken better advice for all my little ailments. Dr. Wilmot has ordered Spa water, sometimes with milk, and once a day with vitriol; and if this does not mend my witchlike looks, and brighten my wooden-headedness, we are to go in the summer to some water drinking place, and if to any, certainly to Sunning Hill, because it is within a ride of Percy Lodge. Oh that the excellent mistress of that place was as near being perfectly well as I am! or that that poor aching head of your's were as little troublesome as my quiet piece of timber.

You mentioned to me long ago a song of Metastasio's, but have never sent it me; do, and in return I will send you a sonnet that I am extremely fond of, from no modern author, but from one whom I am sure you never met with, because you never mentioned him, Carlo Maria Maggi, He is one that Mrs. Rowe would have delighted in, as his devotional poetry is remarkably fine, but to my great mortification I cannot find that she ever read him.

Care dell'alma stanca Albergatrici
Selvi piagge aure, fonti, ombre, verdure
Ove ancor le mie nere, aspre venture
Col dolce rimembrar tornan felici;
Patria del saggio cuor, le cui pendici
Sono à naufragi miei sponde sicure:

Deh

Deh qual porgon sovente, alle mie cure
Dolci conforto i tuoi silenzi amici !

Qui poverta con innocenza addita
Come io passi quaggiù per vie mentorte
La lieta stanza a placida partita.

E qui per vegno in moderata sorte
Di sui lusinghe a liberar la vita
Dé suoi spaventi a disarmar la morte.

Is not this sonnet perfect in its way? And is it not utterly untranslatable?

We have nobody in the house with us but poor Dr. Hume, who after a long and anxious winter's attendance on a wife he tenderly loved, saw it closed by the saddest scene, and now dreads to return to his solitary home. Pray can you tell me any thing of the Adventurer since he left off entertaining and instructing us twice a week? Never was Paper more lamented. Every body is impatient to have him begin on some new scheme. In the mean time I heartily wish you could procure one or two good Papers for the "World*." It has improved much this last winter, and is so generally read, that

* The writers in the "World" were for the most part men of more wit and elegance, than morality. Mr. Moore, Mr. Cambridge, Lord Chesterfield, and Lord Orford (then Mr. H. Walpole) were of the number.

a useful

a useful Paper thrown in there might do a great deal of good. Of all the admired Papers of the Adventurer, I have heard no one more highly spoken of, than that marked Y, which he says he received from an unknown hand, and of which I am sure you could tell me more if you would. Now could not you procure another story from the same hand? It would appear in a Paper which, though not deserving such an ornament, would circulate the instruction, and would contribute to the support of a family which if the Paper fails must be distressed. Your cousin Cambridge* has writ many lively Papers in the World this winter from this mere motive of charity; and some of them are very pretty.

How does your scholar Epictetus go on with his English? Is he tractable, or does he make your head ache? If he does, throw him aside, at least in all fair weather, and pursue your walks. Ours here are delightfully pretty, every path strewed with the falling May, and every field flourishing with the richest verdure. Pray did you ever put lillies of

* Richard Owen Cambridge, Esq. author of the "Scribbleriad," &c. a gentleman well known in the world. He was in no other sense Mrs. Carter's cousin, than by having married a daughter of Mr. Trenchard of Dorsetshire, from which family Mrs. Carter's mother also was maternally descended.

the

the valley in your snuff? I am told they are a specific for the head-ache.

I think ending a Letter is about the same difficulty to me, that concluding a visit with a curtsie is to you; but my visit has been so long that you will be heartily glad here to see the awkward exit of, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *July*, 10, 1754.

I am glad, my dear Miss Talbot, to find you have at length taken advice, and that you are going to make trial of mineral waters, and most heartily hope they will have the desired effect. I rejoice for you that Sunning Hill is in the neighbourhood of Percy Lodge, that is, provided those waters are really good for you, if not, I shall wish it situated in the Atlantic ocean. I hope the hurry at Oxford will do you no harm this year; an oratorio is rather a more quiet thing than an election race week.

I have heard nothing since I writ last about my being made "an Archbishop, or a Governor of an Island."

Island*." But unless my answer should be extremely hurried, I will be sure to refuse neither without acquainting you. All that I know about it is, that the intelligence came from Dr. Head, who was asked several questions by Dr. Hales relating to this affair. But I am in hopes it will all blow over, for this very scheme was mentioned some years ago by Dr. Hales to Lady Palmer; I then gave but little heed to it as a matter of mere talk, but this late revival of it has given me many a fright, though I begin to hope now that nothing will come of it.

I am beyond description charmed with the Italian sonnet you sent me. I am afraid your opinion is too well grounded of its being absolutely untranslatable, at least into our Gothic language. Do not be angry with me if I confess, that I am lately grown a little out of humour with English, to which I used to be so partial; but translating out of Greek has helped me to discover some very provoking defects in it, which never did me any harm before. To complete its downfall from the elevation to which my prejudices had raised it, my walking companion for this last half year has usually been some Italian poet; and of Italian I am grown fonder than ever—After that exquisitely beautiful son-

* Sancho's expected promotion in Don Quixote.

net

net you sent me, I am quite ashamed to let you see poor Metastasio's love song, but the simplicity of it pleased me, and simplicity is an excellence not often to be met with in any modern compositions, except those of our own country, of which I think it is the characteristic. You see whatever uncivil things I have been uttering against the English language, I am perfectly willing to do justice to the English understanding.

Well, but how do you do after that *feverette* or fit of the tooth-ach, into which your conscience must necessarily have worried you by the time your Letter reached Deal; for that most unreasonable application to me for procuring two or three good Papers for the World? Who is so proper to set the example of that charity which you so strongly recommend as yourself? Who so capable of conveying that instruction, which might be so widely circulated by this means? However, though of most people living you have the least need of foreign assistance to raise the character of a Paper you wish well to, I should be extremely glad if it was in my power to procure a story from the same hand as that you mention, which really is a very good one, but this I fear is not to be done.

My aunt and Miss Yardley are come to spend some time at Deal, and by the time they are gone, the irresistible charms of Miss Mulso's company will

will call me to Canterbury for a few days only, for all which causes your friend Epictetus will have a good many holidays. By some means or other I have thus far spent a strange unprofitable summer, and have been idle without any of the joys of idleness. The dear primroses and violets blew almost unheeded, even the roses and myrtles gave but a very languid delight at their first appearance, but they are beginning a little to recover their efficacy; but the spirit of vernal joy has risen this year so slowly in me, that I am apprehensive it will not arrive at is full height till the time when it must be all lavished away upon sunflowers and holyoaks.

Where is Henry and Emma*? Where is the Philosopher and the Telescope †, and why may not either or both appear in a "World" that does not deserve them, since you say it does not deserve such another Paper as letter Y. I have not read any of them this age, but from your account soon will. Lord Corke and Mr. Boyle have writ some this last winter I believe. I would send you the translation of the song but cannot find it.

* An Essay on Prior's Henry and Emma, since printed in Miss Talbot's Works, Essay VIII.—There has been lately a very ingenious conjecture concerning the real Hero of that celebrated Poem, in Censura Literaria, No. xii, New Series, P. 393.

† See Dialogue I, of Miss Talbot's Works.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Aug.* 19, 1754.

"A SECRETARY of state may possibly write more Letters than you do;" said the Bishop of Oxford t'other day to a tardy Correspondent of your's, dear Miss Carter; yet *she* may bear witness that the innocent person accused writes not once in a month to those she most truly values, and from whom she would wish to hear the oftenest. I dare say you have been kindly anxious about me! Yet why should you be anxious for one whose happiness has only lost an addition that it received within the last three years, though one of the greatest and dearest that could have been made to it on this side the sun. My spirits have been greatly affected, as, to you who will not suspect me of vanity in saying it, I may say that my heart scarce ever knew a tenderer attachment, or my mind an higher veneration, than for the excellent person, whose loss I am sure you have deplored. Even before that stroke, I had been deeply touched by the loss of a most worthy and amiable neighbour, and since, I have been distressed by parting with a set of friends, whom I love

love and value from seeing almost every day for two summers; I shall probably never see them again. I pass over several minuter things that have touched my heart and worn my spirits, but I am, I thank God, better, and more cheerful. I believe it is very common after violent emotions and interesting scenes for the mind to fall into a dead calm, in which life seems to stand still, and every thing to be dull, tedious, and unengaging; no aim, no pursuit in view, no idea that any thing is worth pursuing, or that if it were, one had spirit or ability to attempt it. This is the time I fancy for duty and resolution to exert themselves, and when the beams of health begin to gild this calm, every prospect brightens up; and by a proper care to preserve the vessel in due sailing order, and to keep a good look out all around, by degrees the eye catches some object worthy of attention, or gradually gets into motion again, and the voyage goes on pleasantly and safely in its right course—Indeed you need not be uneasy about my health, the regimen I now use agrees with me very well, and if you will come to town next winter, you shall like me better than you have ever had cause to do yet. I am glad Miss Mulso is to be at Canterbury this summer, not only for the present pleasure it is to give you, but because every day passed with such a person increases the attractions to the place where one is

most likely to see them. I will flatter myself with a fairy scheme of making tea for you both in my dressing room: Do you think she would permit this scheme to take place?

I was much pleased the other day in reading a system of moral philosophy, to find that the moral frame was not perfect without a due degree of fear, and of all sorts of passions. 'Tis a posthumous work of Mr. Fordyce, and all together an excellent little book. I have not thanked you for Metastasio's song. I think I will not till you find and send me the translation you had so wickedly mislaid. It had like to have broke my heart one day when I had just parted with *Nice* and *Fileno* both. There cannot be a more striking line than that

"Ecco quel *fiero* istante—"

The whole thing is delightful—touching, elegant, simple, the language of the heart. But Carlo Maggi is of a higher order, and talks very often the language of angels—Looking for some more lines to have sent you, I have unawares spent my whole time in reading some beautiful poems, but too long to transcribe, yet I am undone to have you love my favourite poet as well as I do. But at present I will content myself with mere English prose, which will do well enough to convey every kind

kind wish from my lord and my mother, and the assurance that I am, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Canterbury, *Sept.* 14, 1754.

Indeed, my dear Miss Talbot, I was extremely anxious about you, as well as truly concerned for the loss which the world in general must suffer from the removal of so excellent an example, and yet I had not the heart to write to you, for I have been full of troubles, and very good for nothing.

I enjoy that fairy tea drinking scheme of your's extremely. Indeed I do long to have you better acquainted with Miss Mulso's uncommon merit. I am sure you will honor the greatness of her understanding, and be charmed with the goodness of her heart; in neither of which one ever discovers even the smallest degree of obliquity. It is really quite grievous that in a world like this, where such characters as your's and her's do not always necessarily meet with people resembling themselves in every visiting

visiting room, there should not be a greater easiness of approach between those who are best qualified to converse with each other. Well, no doubt every condition has its advantages, and none but those who enjoy it, can have any idea of the comforts of of insignificancy. I often secretly exult in the privileges that attend one's being suffered to go in and out of a room with as much silence, and as little ceremony as the cat, while people of more consequence are kept at a distance by the forms and fashions of this world, and can only strain their eyes by looking at each other through a telescope—I am undone to have this scheme of your's take place (which I know would give infinite pleasure to Miss Mulso) though I shall not be so happy as to have any immediate share in it, as I have not the least prospect of seeing London either this winter or the next. Harry, if it pleases God he lives and prospers, is to go to the University in two years, and till then I propose to attach myself entirely to him. But you will often rejoice my heart at the distance of seventy miles, by the account of your happiness and healthy looks.

Miss Hall has found the translation of Metastasio's song, which I send you by way of bribe for another of Carlo Maggi's—Have you ever read the "Cry?" No, for if you had you would have mentioned it to me. It never fell in my way till very lately,

lately, and I read it with low spirits, but upon the whole it pleased me mightily. There is sometimes rather too strong a spirit of refining in it, which I believe is the case in all Mrs. Fielding's compositions, and she often puts me in mind of Tacitus. But is she not in general a most excellent writer? Portia's description of the manner in which Ferdinand made love, must I am sure have struck and charmed you.

O dear, O dear, what a world is this for simple folks to live in! I am arrantly tricked and betrayed, and instead of being at Deal on Saturday, as I most certainly engaged to be; by the wicked machinations of Miss Hall, I shall be absent three days longer, for she has secretly and slyly written to Mrs. Underdown, (to whom I had promised to return, she being in great distress about her husband's illness) when she found every fair method of entreaty was ineffectual; and even Miss Mulso, though she did not join in the trick, applauds it, and laughs at me. What shall I do, or how will Mrs. Underdown, or any body else ever take my word again, since, whatever good opinion they may have of the honesty of my heart, there can be no security against the folly of my head, for any other head must have discovered the trick. I suppose it is from the consciousness of my own weakness that I have ever had so mortal an aversion to the delectable

able feats performed by slight of hand, which I always consider as an insult upon short sighted eyes, and plain understandings.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

L'alma di questo suol, genio innocente,
I miei stanchi pensieri omai ristora,
Col silentio, col rio, col verde, e l'ora,
Suna il cuor, pasce i sensi, e bea la mente.
Di me cure in tal pace il cuor si penti,
Edi puri deletti, il senso infiora,
La mente regna, e del Signor che adora
Medita i magisteri, e l'amore sente.
Anco l'età del' or lieta e sicura
Gode le ville, e le lodate ghiande;
Fè le cittadi, e paggioro ventura.
Che Rai vitali aperto ciel ne sponde!
Quanto in sua purità belle è natura!
Quanto in sua libertà l'animo e grande!

I think you will be pleased with this sonnet, though inferior to the other, and the rather if it meets you just returned from Canterbury, dear Miss Carter, for say what they will, the good folks of the golden age could never have so perfect an enjoyment of the country as we have, since they never

never experienced the contrast of dirty, noisy, tumultuous towns. Oct. 30. About a month ago I had writ thus far intending to send away my Letter immediately. And that I have proceeded no further, let the blame fall where it ought on my Lord and my mother, who have been seized all the summer with such a spirit of gadding, that we have spent most part of every day abroad, then one comes home tired and fit for nothing but to loiter. However this rambling loitering life has been of great use both to my health and spirits, I speak it with the utmost thankfulness, and shall endeavour to preserve the blessing by the means it has been attained; but I do not mean here to speak of my shameful negligence in not writing to you, as one of those means, but rather as one of the bad consequences which the best things will sometimes be attended with. Besides, as one's spirits grow stronger one's amusements improve, and though there has been a time this year, to my shame be it spoken, when reading romances did me more good than writing to you, I can now gladly throw aside a better book and take up my pen.

Nov. 26.

Here is another lapse; I am more and more ashamed, so will not say a word about it. Thanks for your note just received. I hope your sprained ancle

ancle has not been so hurtful to you as it may have been beneficial to Epictetus. You talk of sleeping and growing old. If you do nothing better in your confinement, pray get abroad again and *rajeunissez* as fast as you can. Yet do not venture too soon on a weak ancle for fear of a second confinement, which would be more tedious. You see now your brother was better off with a broken bone. Do not be too anxious about him. I wish with all my heart (as I heard a lady once piously say to her son) he was like (not Sir Charles but) Tom Jones. I wish he would but take it into his head to elope to London. Then we should be sure of you, and owe you no thanks neither. For pity's sake, if you will be a tutor all your life, put on a coat and a square cap, and come and be a tutor at Oxford. You are excessively wanted there, and I could help you to a pupil that I would defy you not to love better than you do even your own Harry. Between you both the University would be absolutely reformed in a few years, and consequently the nation in a few more. This scheme now would be somewhat worth while, and as it has nothing to do with matrimony or a court, I do not really see what objection you can make to it.

My studies lately have been such as you would quite approve of, and which I have continually wished you to share in. I was going one day to have

have writ to you in a hurry to ask you whether I had dreamt it, or whether it was possible that I should ever have heard you mention that bigotted heathen Lord Shaftesbury with approbation? I have only looked into the first volume, to compare it as I went on with Mr. Browne's very ingenious and elegant answer, but I have met with so many things that offend me excessively as to leave me little inclination to look further. Arrogance, bitterness, prejudice, and obscurity, the falsest reasoning, the absurdest pride, the vilest ingratitude, the most offensive levity, disgrace whatever there was of elegant, and fair, and honest in some of the ideas, and whatever is easy and genteel in some parts of his style. Pray do not I write at present with a tolerable degree of controversial spirit? Some few things there are that do move my indignation, and these sort of books are at the head of them. The fine ways of the fine folks of this town are of some use to keep my spirits in the same kind of wholesome agitation, though, thank my stars, I live pretty much out of the way of them, and enjoy many solitary evenings here, even more than I did at sweet Cuddesden, where we had most agreeable company with us all the latter part of the year.

I had the pleasure of talking about you a very little with Miss Mulso last week; I met her at Mr. Richardson's, at Parson's Green, where I likewise

saw

saw your friend the elder Mr. Duncombe*. My mother and I were both much pleased with him; his conversation is remarkably pleasant and amusing. When did you hear from Miss Carter? was the question they all asked me. What could my poor conscience answer? You wish the tea-drinking scheme brought about. So do I heartily. But remember it solely depends on your making a third. Consider now what you make me lose.

I am much obliged to Miss Hall and you for the translation. Enclosed is a Carlo Maggi worthy of such a translator. Yes, I did read the "Cry" last spring, but was too much out of charity with one sign-post painting in it, to name it to you. Ferdinand's way of making love did charm me, but his hard-hearted, dishonest, lying, unnatural absurdity of behaviour at last provoked me absolutely beyond all patience. On the whole, Mrs. Fielding is a favourite with us all, though what you say of refinements, is perfectly just, and what we think.

* William Duncombe, Esq, of Frith-street, the translator of Horace, father of the late Rev. John Duncombe, of Canterbury.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *Dec.* 27, 1754.

My dear Miss Carter, I cannot help being so ungenteel as to send you the good wishes of the season, though to any of the fine folks of this town it would certainly be an affront. There was a pretty "World*" on this subject last night, accounting with humour, and also with truth, for the general indistinction of all seasons that prevails. I think I could have added a word or two in his own strain. To wish any body a *merry* Christmas in the old phrase would be quite an absurdity, because that cherry-cheeked, harmless, frank-hearted being, Mirth, has long been banished out of all genteel companies, to make room for that well-dressed, pale-faced racketing hag, Diversion, whose smiles are only from the lips outwards, and whose joy consists in not being gay but envied. The cherry-cheeked lady, however, I hope, is with you, though divested of all her hoydenish airs. As for me, neither one nor the other of these nymphs deign

* Number CIV.

me

me a visit once a quarter; but so long as I keep well with the heads of their families, Cheerfulness and Amusement, I do not lay it much to heart. Amusement visits me in the form of agreeable books, and there is no opening a rightly serious one without finding Cheerfulness at the bottom of every page. There is a very pretty poem, which I have had laying upon my table for you for these three weeks, from Dr. Dalton*. 'Tis too large for the Post, and how to send it I cannot comprehend. Not that the matter is in itself at all difficult, but that I am just now under a powerful spell of laziness. This is really abominable, when I know that your approbation will give the good man more true pleasure than the applauses of half his friends besides.

It would be great charity in you to think of half a dozen subjects for plays, and notify them to Mr. Richardson; for I am clear in it that a play must be his next undertaking, and some undertaking he must have to keep him in tolerable health and spirits. Do think of some subject for an interesting kind of comedy, or for tragedy in common life. Indeed if he undertook two or three at a time it

* Who versified, altered, and adapted the songs in Comus for the stage; of which the Editor has been told from good authority he was much ashamed when farther advanced in life.

would

would suit his boundless genius best, and 't is a pity that genius should be lost in inactivity. You call him a coquet I find (so did I one day), but are not you a prude yourself if you do not write to him? This is not meant for a Letter; 'tis only a notification of Dr. Dalton's Poems, an entreaty to let me hear from you, a conveyance for my Lord's and my mother's sincere good wishes, and an assurance how much I am, &c.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Jan.* 11, 1755.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear Miss Talbot, for your *ungenteel* good wishes, which I shall be heartily glad to find accomplished. It has been some months since I held any acquaintance with the cherry-cheeked nymph, of whom you make such honourable mention. It has given me pleasure to hear, even at a distance, of her being alive and well, for, however disgracefully she may be turned out of polite assemblies in London, she is still kindly received

received in country towns; and though perhaps she is not admitted at whist or brag tables, she still presides here among a set of good-humoured, obstreperous, fat gentlewomen, at a table of twopenny commerce.

I have at length got through Epictetus, though not so free of blots and interlineations as I could have wished. I shall have an opportunity of sending it you in about three weeks, in the mean time I will endeavour to give some little account of the stoical philosophy, which you seemed to think would be right, if my poor head will give me leave.

It is very long since I read Lord Shaftesbury, and I only remember in general that I was charmed with his imagination and language, but thought him a very bad reasoner, and was greatly offended at his levity. Besides, his great fondness for raillery often rendered his real meaning absolutely unintelligible. I was mentioning him the other day to my brother, and he said, I think very justly, that he had always observed, that Lord Shaftesbury was the idol of specious trifling understandings.

I can easily forgive the racketing life you lead in the country for depriving me so long of hearing from you, in consideration of the good it did your health. I am doubtful whether the quiet you enjoy in London can agree half so well with you; better I am persuaded than a fashionable life would, for racketing

ing in London and racketing in the country are totally different things.

I fear, by what you say of good Mr. Richardson, his health is in but an uncomfortable state. But are you seriously of opinion that writing can be a remedy for it? If you are, you are not singular; for I remember when I was in London to have heard somebody say, that whenever Mr. Richardson thought himself sick it was because he had not a pen in his hand. If this be really the case, I wish, both for his own sake and that of the world, he would undertake the half dozen plays, which you reasonably propose by way of exercise. I cannot for the life of me think of any one subject. You call me a prude, but indeed I writ twice to him without receiving any answer; and as I believe he has a great deal of business, and I have very little leisure, and writing is become a mere task to me, I thought it was better for both of us the Correspondence should cease. If you are still under "the powerful spell of a fit of laziness" you will find a great deal of reason in this account of the matter. From the equitable principle of *petimus damusque vicissim*, I will forgive your detaining Dr. Dalton's Poem till you are perfectly convinced in your conscience, that the removing it from your table will not require the aid and assistance of the whole family, and endanger the fall of the house. In the

mean time, I will be so just to the Doctor as not absolutely to conclude from the difficulty of the removal that his poem is composed of lead. My sister was married yesterday to a clergyman of the name of Pennington. My youngest sister, at coming from church, where they had all been a good deal affected, put on one of her prettiest Magdalene looks, and declared she would never be married.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's *Jan*, 23, 1755.

At last, dear Miss Carter, Dr. Dalton is coming, but he has waited this last fortnight for some volumes of stoic philosophy, which the Bishop of Norwich has lent me for your service, as he thinks there is the best account given in them that he has any where met with. This the Bishop of Oxford approves of very much, and therefore on Saturday they go by the carrier to Deal. By the same voiture, at the same time, but not, I fear, in the

the same box, will arrive your piquet money, which, since you would not come to make my mother's conscience easy by finishing the pool, has transformed itself into one of the frippery caps of the prettiest make that I have seen this winter. I would not send you a butterfly cap, because you country folks may be apt to think butterflies are not in season till spring, nor butterfly caps till the first of April.

I heartily congratulate you on your sister's match. I hope it will be a very happy one. But indeed the more brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces you have round you, the more seven-fold bars I foresee against our ever meeting more, unless some time or other, when I am grown very genteel indeed, I should call at Deal in my way to Paris. However, when I lay this out of my thoughts, I very disinterestedly rejoice in the happiness you must all at present enjoy together, and most heartily wish you all every agreeable circumstance that can increase it. Give my love to your sister Mary, and tell her I hope she will change her mind, and marry somebody in this part of the world, as I look upon that as the only chance of bringing you amongst us again. *Amongst us!* what a strange sort of *us* is this great town composed of! But I will not rail at this town, I have no reason this winter I am sure, for I continue as well and live as quiet as if I was in the

country. Not one crowd have I been in, nor do I intend to be in one. But I lose my time intolerably at home among a parcel of idle French books, and still idler English ones; nothing tolerable of the amusing kind has come out this winter. In this I do not include Barbarossa. How do you like it?

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Jan.* 27, 1755.

The parcel arrived very safe last night; but I am afraid I looked with more kindness upon the bandbox than the quartos, which I hope the good Bishops are not such inquisitors as to insist upon my reading quite through. To be sure Mrs. Talbot will be very careful how she runs in debt again, if she is always to pay such immoderate interest. I am very much obliged to her for the cap, which is very pretty indeed, so pretty that I shall hardly be able to resist the temptation of putting it on, from the prudent consideration of its being half a century too young for me. As the fine weather approaches

approaches I may probably grow less scrupulous; and indeed even in this cold dark season I am not so much mortified to the love of finery but that I extremely enjoy the ribbons.

Last week Epictetus set out on his voyage, and probably in a few days you will receive him. I fear it is not as correct as it ought to be, but the constant employments that every day brings with it, and the very frequent interruptions which my few leisure hours receive from the head-ache, leave me but little hopes of making any further improvements; but if there is any thing you will point out, I will try, if not, I will proclaim a holiday to myself, and, if I live and prosper, will set out a rambling as far as my stick can carry me. As you are an excellent quack, can you give me a prescription for a weak ankle? Tar-water and a fiddle, your two specifics, I have tried without success.

Do pray hasten this genteel trip of your's to Paris, for that unlucky expression of your's about bars against our "ever meeting again" has strangely disconcerted me. At present I really see but little prospect of it till Harry goes to the University. As to my other brothers and sisters, if they are well settled in the world (as I heartily wish they were) I do not see why it should prevent my rambling.

I read

I read Barbarossa in a great hurry, but remember in general that I was as well pleased with it as I could be with a tragedy that has so little poetry in it. It gives me the utmost pleasure to hear so good an account of your London life, and I feel very little commiseration about your task of reading silly books, which is paying an easy price for health and spirits unfatigued. I highly applaud your keeping clear of crowds, but I rather hope that concerts do not come under this denomination, for I think these never used to do you any harm, and they always did Mrs. Talbot good. My brother has diffused a very musical spirit among us here, and we have had several little parties by way of concert that have been very amusing and cheerful. Our own family supplies two violins and a thorough bass, besides sundry degrees of vociferation, from a whisper to a squall, by way of singing. But my brother going to London for the present puts a stop to all these pleasant schemes.——You do not tell me a word about these new commotions. Every thing for some days has seemed to be in an alarm, and nobody seems to know why.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *Feb.* 7, 1755.

Many thanks, dear Miss Carter, for your noble and excellent volume. How much rather would I stay at home this evening, and study good Epictetus, and reflect on every page how infinitely we are obliged to you for taking such immense pains to introduce him to us, than go out shivering in the cold to pay half a score unedifying visits! But Epictetus would not allow me to give such a useless preference to what is not in my power, and Miss Carter would chide me were I to grow unsociable; so to oblige you both I will visit to-night, and go and see masks at an early hour to-morrow. Make no scruples about your cap, you old-fashioned creature! its only fault is being too large, and too formal and grave. Even I myself wear one that is not half so big as my hand.

You are not acquainted with Mrs. Donnelon I believe, but I have promised to write to you a great deal about her. That she is a very sensible and ingenious woman you know. Did not you permit Miss

Miss Highmore to give her a copy of your poem "To a Lady fond of Life?" She shewed it lately to Sir George Lyttelton, who thought and spoke of it as he ought, and earnestly begged for a copy. This she was too honorable to grant. The Bishop of Oxford says she was *too* scrupulous. On their further conversation Sir George entreated her to persuade the lady who writ such excellent pieces to publish them herself. This I do not think you will approve of, or to send correct copies to Mr. Dodsley, to publish in his new volume of Miscellanies. He supported this advice by a maxim of Mr. Pope's, "If you don't marry your daughter, somebody will run away with her." Things will steal abroad some time or other; is it not better they should appear in the dress you wish them, and in proper company? But you and I don't always agree what is good company and what not. Some of your tuneful choir had warbled in Magazines among many unclean birds, when you was scandalized at finding your Owl on Clarissa's harpsichord. But I hope you are cured of these pruderies. Dodsley's Miscellanies are better far than any others; I would have them still improve. Why should not Miss Mulso and you now and then throw in a few gems without any other name than by a lady? I do not press this as an air of consequence, but I cannot help naming it as what for many reasons I wish

for

—for the honor of poetry, of the nation, of the sex.

There is a whole shoal of new books. The Centaur*, well worth reading I think; Theron and Aspasia, too grave, I am afraid, to be much read; the Bishop of London's second volume of excellent Sermons; Dean Swift's poor and conceited account of his Uncle, with some few things in it one likes to see. Of the Novels of the winter I know little. The Worlds of this winter are admirable. Man is a serious Paper, but a dull one. I wish I knew any thing worth telling you, but I am in a state of profound ignorance. I will only therefore repeat my most grateful thanks for your inestimable present, and which by studying I will endeavour to deserve. A notion has occured to both of us, that it would be right that somebody or other should collect all the few things that are any where recorded both of Epictetus and Arrian, and form them into a short account of their lives and characters. Whether you are that somebody I do not opine to say.

* Probably the "Centaur not Fabulous," by Dr. Young.

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, March 3. 1755.

WHOEVER that somebody or other is who is to write the Life of Epictetus, seeing I have a dozen shirts to make, I do opine, dear Miss Talbot, it cannot be I. However, seriously I did think of the thing, but there are so very few particulars to be met with upon this subject, and those few so universally known, that it seemed to me quite unnecessary. I read that part of the Bishop of Norwich's quarto which relates to the Stoic philosophy, but met with nothing there that seems of any consequence to add to the Introduction. The turn which that author gives to the doctrine of the Stoics is a very severe one, and the *snake* which he seems so fond of crushing, perhaps, most commonly owes its birth to his own imagination. Upon the whole, Lipsius and Gattaker may be too favorable, but the other (O dear, I have forgot his name) appears to me greatly too censorious.

I know not what to say to your proposal about Dodsley's Miscellanies, except saying honestly that it

it does not please me at all *. If I ever writ any thing worth printing, I should rather chuse to publish them myself than have them published by any body else. If I ever do appear in a Miscellany, I should chuse it should be in a Miscellany of Ladies. One may venture to say this with regard to the lady writers of the present age, though it would not have been much to one's credit perhaps in the last. As to the Magazines, my being very young then, and my personal acquaintance with and esteem for Mr. Cave, must be my excuse. The poor man had a hearty *twinkation* once for suffering me to appear in bad company.

I am obliged to you for the account of the new books, not one of which have reached Deal, except some novels, which I had not patience to read through. My present study is Plato's Republic. I have just got through as much as one can read of Fielding's Miscellanies, which I never saw before. Did you ever read them? and are not they extremely good and extremely bad? If my Lord and you really think all the few particulars relating to Epictetus, and the still fewer to Arrian, should be collected together, why I will do it as well as I can.

* Several of them, however, were published in that collection.

Lipsius,

Lipsius, A. Gellius, and Rollin, will, I believe, furnish me with all that is to be known.

I am inclined to believe you must be in as profound a state of ignorance as you affirm, or to be sure you would have told me whether we are to have peace or war. Nothing, however, can excuse your not filling that blank page of your Letter with railings at the French.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *May* 14, 1755.

Here we are, dear Miss Carter, and in this peaceful place I hope and intend to become again an orderly country gentlewoman and regular Correspondent. Your volume was seized on the moment I produced it, but you will hear more of it by and by. But are not you very glad it is out of your hands and off your conscience for the present? Do not you enjoy the holidays of this year after the labours of the last? Do not you feel prodigiously at liberty to do what you will, and to be as

as unphilosophical as you please? Or does your time hang heavy on your hands, like poor Mr. Richardson's, who would give a good deal, I believe, if he was fairly got into the midst of a new work, though he has not resolution enough to venture on the beginning. If that be the case, do you begin in the middle, and write backward to the beginning, while he begins at the same point, and writes on to an affecting conclusion. This is a new scheme this minute, and romance being just the contrary extreme to philosophy, it will unstoicise you delightfully. Or if you want only a day's amusement now and then, let me repeat my exhortation, that you will send a Paper or two to the World. It has gone on extremely well this winter, and rallied both the vices and follies of the age with a very instructive vivacity. In the summer I suspect auxiliaries will drop off, and the Paper droop into great insipidity, which, as it is at present so universally read by all fashionable people, will rob them of the only instruction they care to attend to. You will be afraid to see my hand on the cover of a Letter, for fear it should every time enclose the unconscionable proposal of some new task; but I only gently suggest what I own so idle a person as I am has no right to mention, and will allow you as full an enjoyment of spring and summer rambles as you please. 'Tis of more consequence to the

world

world that you should take care of your health and recruit your spirits, than that you should attend to any idle suggestions of mine that may happen to dart across my fancy. You, I suppose, enjoy the early sweets of the morning, and converse with the rising sun; invaluable hours, whose loss I continually regret, though my health is evidently the better for the greater proportion of sleep that has been prescribed. I mention this that you may take it into mature consideration whether a little more sleep might not be of essential service to you. Between seven and eight hours is my comfortable nap. I am told that scarce any body can do with less. Consider now how much sleep you are in arrears.

From this very quiet village you will expect no intelligence. From you I expect the earliest, of invasions and maritime affairs. I can scarce imagine that the summer will pass over without alarms, and one would think they were very desirable things by the peevishness with which people throw aside a newspaper that has nothing in it but common occurrences. Adieu, let half your next Letter consist of questions, that I may have somewhat to answer, for you see I am very indolent and stupid, and can write nothing *de mon chef*, but that I am, &c.

MRS.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 13, 1755.

Your long silence, my dear Miss Talbot, was compensated to me by the good account you send me of your health, which I hope the air of Oxfordshire will continue; but whether the air of Oxfordshire or any other may afford a remedy against that indolence of which you complain I cannot tell. I am only very certain that indolence is a distemper not to be cured by the air of Kent. It will not however I hope prevent either you from riding or me from walking many a good mile, in spite of the danger there may be that when we are got out, we may never be able to determine when we are to return. You indeed will be secured by the prudent restrictions of the Bishop of Oxford, but I who most commonly travel alone, when I am once set a going may chance to be carried away by a mere *vis inertiæ* to the world's end for want of a guide.

All the family is gone to town for my brother's wedding, (whose prospects are I thank God as bright

bright as heart can wish) and I am left as solitary as may be, but not quite so gay as if the sun would shine out a little brighter and enliven my walks. The landscapes of June make a strange unnatural appearance beneath a December sky. I scarcely ever remember any weather so pleasant as the early part of spring, nor so gloomy and uncomfortable as it has been almost ever since. Indeed those hours which Harry and the head-ache leave me, by no means hang heavy on my hands, nor have I the least inclination to write half a romance, or a whole World. To be sure you may think me very like Lady L— (not Mr. Richardson's Lady L—) who in the midst of a visit to her country neighbours borrowed a pen and ink, and declares she has a *need* to write. Now I do assure you upon my word and honour that no such *need* have I, and if a thousand good subjects were now to fall in my way, not the least propensity should I feel to write one word about any one of them. Almost the only motive of my ever taking a pen into my hand, is the hope of preserving a place in the remembrance of some few friends by whom I cannot bear the thoughts of being forgot. Besides at present my attention is much engaged in studying the art and mystery of talking upon principle, which in the absence of most of those to whom I speak from mere natural impulse is quite necessary to prevent my forgetting the use

of

of articulation. In a zealous pursuit of this laudable scheme I have already talked myself into a very meritorious fit of the head-ache; for in the first attempt to open my mouth, falling upon a subject which by some odd unlucky chance I happened to understand, I harangued upon it to the excessive astonishment of my hearers for half an hour; but as this violence of speech condemned me to silence for the rest of the day, I am determined for the future to proceed in a more moderate way, and talk only by the minute.

How do you like Mr. Johnson's Dictionary? I have only seen part of the Preface, which was like himself. I have just been reading Mr. Swift's* account of the Dean, a book at which I am greatly scandalized. I do not remember ever to have met with so open and shameful a vindication of that species of idolatry which is the absolute ruin of all virtue, the worship of the world. O, as to sleep which you so cordially recommend, I slept enough in the winter when I could do nothing else, to serve any reasonable person for the whole year; however even now I have nearly as comfortable a proportion of slumber as yourself.

* Mr. Dean Swift's Essay on the Life, &c. of Dr. Swift, to whom he was related. It was published in this year.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *July* 9, 1755.

You will I am afraid, dear Miss Carter, wish me in the Indies for the errand that accompanies this Letter. It is to notify the visit you will soon receive from a venerable personage, of whose company, though I think it excellent, you have long ago been sufficiently weary. You will guess I am going to name our old friend Epictetus, who proposes returning to you in a few days to receive his last polish before he makes his appearance in the world. The Bishop of Oxford shut himself up with him for near a month, never leaving his study but for his morning ride and afternoon walk. My own horse being luckily lame for some time, I used to steal into the study while he rode, for a tête a tête with the old philosopher *.

* The remainder of this Letter, together with some others between the date of this and the next Letter, is omitted; because the substance of them, which principally related to Epictetus, has been already published in Mrs. Carter's Memoirs.

Miss

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Nov.* 29, 1755.

I CAN write but a very short Letter, dear Miss Carter, as we are in the midst of bustle and confusion; on Monday we set off for that scene of hurry and perplexities St. Paul's. But I must needs send you back your papers and my Lord's remarks: I agree with him in all of them that come within my unlearned comprehension. But above all I most earnestly beseech you to consider of what infinite importance it is, that your allusions and quotations from "the words of eternal life," should be chosen and made in such a manner as evidently to manifest that superiority of divine to human, which so many, alas, are endeavouring as fast as they can to forget. By no means compare him, "who spake as never man spake," with the proud surly Cynic. Oh, my dear friend, the more attentively you study those sacred books, the true and only source of light and joy and comfort, the more you will glory in their excellence, the more you will rejoice in even this opportunity of bearing a faithful testimony to it in an age like ours. How

long we shall any of us have this, or any opportunity, God knows. "Wars and rumours of wars, great earthquakes in divers places, the sea and the waves roaring—mens hearts failing them for fear" —This year is a very alarming one—But, God be thanked, there *is* a sure place of refuge, and there is only *one*.

Great caution I am sensible is to be used and every expression avoided that can give needless offence, as well as every one that cannot be justified by the strictest truth—But where truth leads the way, dare undauntedly to follow.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Dec.* 22, 1755.

By this time, dear Miss Talbot, I had hoped to have sent you the Introduction, but constant head-aches have made me go on so slowly in composing, that for the present you must be contented with this parcel of translations; the Enchiridion and the fragments are finished—Be so good

as to remind my lord of looking for Athlete in Johnson.

God forbid that it should *now* be necessary for me to study the Sacred Writings in order to glory in their excellence, and discover their superiority to all others; or that I should think of making the comparison against which you caution me! I must certainly have made use of some strange careless manner of expression, that could possibly convey any idea to you so absolutely contrary to my persuasion or intentions. This has indeed been an alarming year; how dreadful are the accounts from Lisbon*. My spirits have been most deeply affected by them, and the more particularly as I have been almost every day with a person for whom I have a very great regard, and whose fortune I fear will be totally ruined by this sad and deplorable calamity, though she seems at present less affected by her own distresses, than those of her suffering friends at Lisbon. Amidst all the melancholy ideas which have saddened my mind, in reading many private letters on this unhappy occasion, it has given me a very affecting pleasure to observe the very perfect submission and resignation to this heavy dispensation of Providence, which the suffer-

* The earthquake happened on the 1st of November, 1755.

ers

ers express in their very calamitous situation. This I hope is an argument that as bad as, on a general view, we in this age and nation may appear to be, there are much greater numbers of good people than the uniform tenor of private life gives one an opportunity of discovering, unless they are called out on any great and trying occasion.

You were very good in being vexed for me when you saw my name in that curious collection which makes up Baldwin's frontispiece. I have had the mortification of seeing it in some trumpery advertisement or other, so often within this last half year, that I have lost all patience, and throw away the newspaper quite in a tiff whenever I meet with it. What can one do with these miscellany mongers, magazine mongers, and roguery mongers of all kinds? What they have stolen, or to what they have chose to affix my name, I have always been too much out of humour to enquire. It is very possible these gentlemen have done me the honour of ascribing poetry to me which I never writ, as others in a more private manner have pamphlets and letters which I never saw.—But after all, when one considers what are the real evils of life, and still more when one feels them, how very idle is it to suffer one's-self to be affected with a moment's uneasiness by such foolish trifles as these. It is

surely

surely wrong, and I will endeavour to be wiser for the future.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *Feb.* 24, 1756.

We have looked in Johnson for *Athlete*, no such word there, nor any thing of the kind but *Athletic*, with explanations every body knows.

I was conscious when my last Letter went away (and I had not time to soften it) that there was a vehemence of expression in it very improperly addressed to one, who I am sure cannot but see the infinitely important subject in the same light that I do. My vehemence therefore (had there been time to explain it) was fighting not with you, but with I know not what complex idea of cold critics, and half-headed readers, that some of the notes, and my apprehensions of the mis-use that would certainly be made of them had conjured up in my mind. Oh that we could but meet by the fire side, instead of thus writing in distant counties! How much it would

would be for the ease of *your* head and the good of *mine!* Is there no hope next spring?

Have I been very busy, you ask? Why really if I have 'tis to very little purpose, for I can recollect very little I have done. *Have I then been very idle?* I heartily hope not, for that is against all my principles and resolutions. Not one of the places appropriated to dissipation have I appeared in this year. I have lived on quietly from day to day, less at home than I should choose, if mere choice were the rule to be followed, and yet less *with* the friends in going to whom I have spent so much time; the distance from one end of this huge town to the other being immense. Letters received ten months ago unanswered, books borrowed before Christmas unread, and all this without my being conscious of any very useful business or any great degree of wilful idleness.—This is but an indifferent view of life—If my time runs out thus imperceptibly without any visible expence, there must be some secret cheat I put upon myself which ought to be well looked into, and I thank you for calling upon me to do it—"throw hours away?"—"Throw empires, and be blameless."

I do not tell you, however, that I have not writ many letters, read very many books, spent much time in company of excellent people that I love, and a great deal in such exercise as was necessary for

for my health; but it is almost necessary in this place to live au jour la journée, and giving up all schemes and choices of one's own, to dispatch just such employments as the present moment more immediately calls for. And I think Epictetus says excellent things on this head, and affirms that this is the very purpose one reads for, not to be always sighing after leisure, but to know how to live sometimes without it. Not but I do sigh very often to feel such a dead weight of unimproved time upon my hands, as in the visits of this town one does feel very heavily, when a whole afternoon's conversation is wasted on the most uninteresting trifles. Would time really stand still for so long, this wretched trifling might be less unpardonable—But time flows on in the same rapid course, and while we still trifle, eternity is upon us. A gracious Providence calls upon us by the loudest alarms *, to hasten and finish our appointed work—and we carelessly divert our attention to objects and undeserving the serious contemplations of a monkey. I do not call it trifling to be gay with our friends, to enliven the circle of social good humour, to improve all our talents, small as well as great, to the praise of the Giver, thankfully to enjoy and admire even his least and most common bounties, to re-

* Such as the earthquake at Lisbon.

fresh

fresh ourselves with needful relaxation, to indulge the innocent sportings of fancy at fit times—But indeed I have no patience with the false politeness of the world which banishes every subject that is interesting and delightful, if it bears but the name of seriousness, to introduce every one that is dull and tiresome merely because it is unimportant. Some striking subjects have indeed forced themselves upon every body's attention this winter, and the effects appeared in such a solemn observation of the general fast, as one could not see without great hope and pleasure. Many excellent sermons that day has produced which will still do further good, but alas! in a soil where the world so plentifully sows its weeds and thorns, little lasting good can be expected without a daily preparation of the ground begun in humility and continued with patience—I take the unconscionable liberty of writing to you who do *not* need it, what I dare not speak in polite companies that *do*; but you wished for a Letter, and here it is. I confess I am in a peculiarly serious disposition this winter, though by no means a gloomy one. I have great awe upon my mind, and yet no sort of panic. An earnest desire to be the better myself, and as earnest a one that every body else may be the better for the warnings we have had, the storms that seem ready to break over us, and which yet, after a salutary threatening, may be

dispelled

dispelled by Him who made all things, and into whose hands all things are committed, Him who having *been tempted in all* things like ourselves is ready and able *to succour those that are tempted*, Him who said to the enraged sea, Peace, be still, and can in a moment *still the noise of the waves, and the madness of the people*—" *Look unto me and be saved all ye ends of the earth.*"—May Britain, once looked upon as the extremest part of the earth *, but do so as she ought, not on a single day of humiliation only, but through the whole tenor of a Christian conduct. Then invasions and earthquakes will be disarmed of their terror. I am afraid from the shock you † tell me of in Kent, from a stronger mentioned in the papers from Dunkirk, and from a strange uncertainty in the tides that has been observed here for some weeks, we shall hear from some more distant part of some new and terrible stroke. Certain it is from all these appearances that the commotions of the earth are not yet quieted—had the one minute in which you perceived such a gentle motion been lengthened into three or four—or had a shock of the same kind which I barely perceived

* —— in ultimos
Orbis Britannos.—Hor. Ode xxxv. Lib. 1.

† That Letter is missing.

in

in Oxfordshire last May—In what scenes of distress had we both been involved, how likely that we might never more have met in this world! Such thoughts do not strike me with melancholy, they only serve to endear every friend and heighten the value of every added moment, at the same time that they loosen the mind from these vanishing scenes. I often look upon the loftiest and strongest buildings, as shadowy forms in a cloud, which may the next minute disappear; the scenes of gaiety appear like gleams of April sunshine, which may instantaneously be overcast—But

"Tutto si scuota il mondo e si dirocchi
Dè mali di quaggiù fia tosto il fine;
Purche il trono beato alfin si tocchi
Che for si possan mai queste rovine?
Anzi fia dolce ondi revolger gli occhi
Da fiori eterni alle passate spine."

Were idle fears to be indulged I should not at all like your situation, so near the swelling sea,—so near the threatened coast—but in what situation are we secure from dangers—in what situation of danger are we from under the immediate eye of a gracious Providence! I am in a strange humour for talking to-day, oh that it were talking with you indeed, and not writing!

I will now talk a little like Letter-writing. My mother

mother the other day fell in love with your friend Mrs. Williams*, whom we met at Mr. Richardson's, and is particularly charmed with the sweetness of her voice. I am very glad her play succeeded so well, and heartily wish it had been in my power to have been of more service to her, the few persons I could speak to I did. Before your Letter came I had been honored with one from Mr. Johnson himself, so highly polite and complimental that it infinitely distressed me. To answer it was impossible, to leave it unanswered rude. I sent at last somewhat between a note and a card; the overplus of writing that was due to him I have amply paid to you in this present Epistle. You are very kind in wishing to hear from me, but surely such Letters as these are not worth a halfpenny a dozen.

You do not mention the having heard of any remarkable noise previous to the balancing motion. I suppose therefore there either was none, or you did not attend to it. With us the whole day was immoderately snowy. It pleases me to think in what excellent employment the shock had it been

* Mrs. Anna Williams. Dr. Johnson wrote also to Mrs. Carter in her favor, which Letter is printed in p. 27 of her Memoirs, quarto edition. This Play called the "Uninhabited Island," from Metastasio, was published together with some Essays and Verses in 1766, in a small quarto volume.

greater

greater would have found you. Most heartily do I wish all possible success to the great pains you have taken with your brother. How important your task, to form the mind that is hereafter to instruct so many! My best wishes attend all you love, and my gratitude to yourself for permitting me to be of the number. Pray keep a good look out on the coast, and send me all manner of intelligence.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *March* 13, 1756.

In return for a Letter which did me so much good, I heartily wish, my dear Miss Talbot, I could send you some comfortable news from the coast. But though I do as you bid me, and keep as good a look out as I can, I meet with little intelligence to be depended upon. A paquet which arrived yesterday from Calais brings an account that thirty transports were there, and several pieces of cannon and mortars just arrived, which looks no very friendly circumstance to this neighbourhood. You express a kind concern at my situation, which to be sure at present does not appear a very desire-

able

able one. But I thank God my hopes have hitherto been equal to my fears *. One hears indeed from every quarter of the vast preparations and formidable menaces of our enemies, but "*let not him who girdeth on his harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off.*" I think on the Ben-hadads, the Sennacheribs, and the Philips of this world, and receive great consolation. The same Almighty blast which disconcerted their schemes, may equally frustrate those of our restless and ambitious neighbours. If human means and human wisdom were infallible means of success, which God be thanked they are not, no doubt there is much to fear, for I am not quite so stoical as Epictetus would have me be, nor can I think the plundering and demolishing the habitations of human creatures, exactly the same thing as pulling down the nests of storks and swallows; though one should be mighty sorry to have a hand in either. At all events Providence will be the support of those who humbly rely on its protection. Upon the whole I am in very good spirits, and I beg you will not feel any alarm upon my account.

* And so they continued with the same pious trust in Providence to the end of her life; so that even in these last wars, infirm and helpless as she then was, she suffered much less from fear, than most of her younger and more healthy neighbours did.

There

There have been several Letters sent to this town from a *Marchand* in Calais, assuring our smugglers of safety in carrying on their wicked trade there, and instructing them in the proper signals to prevent their being molested by the French vessels or forts. Some of these people, who had been imprisoned there before, have been suffered to return; and are now under confinement here, and one of the Letters I have mentioned is sent up to one of the public offices.

To a mind like your's the spiritless unimproving turn of fashionable conversation must, no doubt, be sufficiently mortifying; and yet, perhaps, if you were in my situation you might be tempted to think these were only mere harmless negatives, which you would be mighty glad to take in exchange for noise and fury. A very idle affair has lately happened here which has thrown me into some perplexity. As I cannot help thinking both sides in the wrong; it is a difficult point to keep quite well with either. I have hitherto however fared tolerably well, by keeping myself extremely silent, the only method I believe in such cases of being either innocent or safe, when no kind of good can be done to others, and much harm to one's-self may arise from talking. That you may not think my situation worse than it is, in being placed amidst this uproar of turbulent spirits, I must tell you

you that there are a great many sensible good kind of people with whom I converse very agreeably, besides making a delectable party at *farthing quadrille.*

I was heartily glad to hear poor Mrs. Williams had so good a benefit, and am greatly obliged to you for your endeavours in her favour. I pitied and laughed at your embarras about Mr. Johnson's Letter.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *April* 13, 1756.

I have been running about sadly since I wrote to you last, once at Oxford, twice at Richmond with Lady Grey, who is far from well. How dearly would you love her little girl! just turned of five, has no joy but in books, and of those will not read little idle stories such as were first given to her, but picks out for herself; her knowledge in geography and English history is astonishing; her present book is Dr. Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies, which she has almost by heart, and gives the most connected and rational account of

it. With all this she is just such a romp as a child ought to be; a quick temper, but as quick a command of it, and bating such little weeds of pride and passion as will shoot up spontaneously in every human soil, an exceeding good little heart.

I do not know how it may be with you in Kent, but here in town we think very little about invasions at present, for there is no thought on which our minds dwell long, except it be operas and fashions. The only public place I have been to this winter was last Friday to hear the Messiah, nor can there be a nobler entertainment. I think it is impossible for the most trifling not to be the better for it. I was wishing all the Jews, Heathens, and Infidels in the world (a pretty full house you'll say) to be present. The Morocco ambassador was there, and if his interpreter could do justice to the divine words (the music any one that has a heart must feel) how must he be affected, when in the grand choruses the whole audience solemnly rose up in joint acknowledgement that He who for our sakes *had been despised and rejected of men*, was, *their Creator, Redeemer, King of kings, Lord of lords!* To be sure the playhouse is an unfit place for such a solemn performance, but I fear I shall be in Oxfordshire before it is to be heard at the Foundling Hospital, where the benevolent design and the attendance of the little

boys

boys and girls adds a peculiar beauty even to this noblest composition. But Handel who could suit such music to such words deserves to be maintained, and these two nights, I am told, have made him amends for the solitude of his other oratorios. How long even this may be fashionable I know not, for next winter there will be (if the French come) two operas; and the opera and oratorio taste are, I believe, totally incompatible. Well they may! This one public place has gained me a few holidays by allowing me to plead a cold, which by staying at home gives me this evening three or four hours of uninterrupted quiet. You cannot think what a rarity that is in this town. And yet what is it one goes out for!—the mere drudgery of civility most times. Have you seen the reflections, maxims, and characters, moral, critical, and satirical? Amusing, I think, and not bad; writ by a fine man that no mortal suspected for an author; a Mr. Greville (not Miss Byron's). Somebody said of it very well, that it is quite a French book written in English.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 3, 1756.

I AM making all possible dispatch to finish my task, as I shall shortly have a safe opportunity of sending it by a safe hand to London. Epictetus and I have been so long acquainted that it would be some grief of heart to me to expose him to any hazardous way of travelling, and I have a still stronger reason to be solicitous about him, as he is your property. I should be therefore mighty glad if he was safely deposited in St. Paul's Deanery, where he will be ready to attend your commands, and receive from you the whole disposition of his fate. As soon as I have dispatched Epictetus to St. Paul's, Harry to the University, and finished my fifteen shirts, I comfort myself with the hopes of being at liberty to grow most delectably idle, to read what books I please, and run wild over hill and dale for the rest of the summer.

I am much obliged to you for your excellent Notes, which I have transcribed, except one. I find myself obliged sometimes in mere charity to undertake the cause of the poor heathen against you, upon whom, I think, you are in general too severe. You

bid

bid me refer to Solomon, "to what is there said of those women who were allowed by the *boasted morality of Greece and Rome.*" The references to Solomon, whose observations on this subject are inimitably fine, may be very just, but the censure, considering the quotations, are to be from a Jewish, not a Christian writer, I believe you will think not quite fair. See Abp. Potter's Greek Antiquities, B. IV. c. 11. Besides, even if the quotation had been made from the New Testament, I know not if such an animadversion might be perfectly justifiable, as perhaps this toleration might be highly offensive to wise and good heathens in Greece and Rome, as no doubt it is with stronger reasons in Italy and Holland, where I have heard the same allowances, with far less excuse, are supported by the laws. In general I believe it is scarcely ever of any use, and perhaps very seldom right, to depreciate the heathen morality*. Wise and good men in all ages, who sincerely applied their hearts to the discovery of their duty, cannot, I think, be supposed in any very material instances to have failed, though they had neither a proper authority, nor could promise sufficient encouragements to qualify them for effectual instructors of the multitude

* But Bp. Secker was of a different opinion. See a Letter from him upon this subject, (never published before) in "Censura Literaria," Vol. IX. p. 305.

of

of mankind. The Christian religion has peculiar and distinguishing advantages enough of its own to prove its divine excellence to every unprejudiced mind, and on these we may safely rest our cause, even if we grant every thing to the heathen morality which its most zealous admirers can demand.

I am obliged to you for your picture of your little friend. Such a genius and such a heart, assisted by circumstances of rank and fortune that will set them in the fairest light, and give them the most extensive influence, one cannot help considering with great pleasure as an important blessing to human society. While I had nothing but my favourite Metastasio in my head I was mightily scandalized at the contempt with which you mention operas; but as, upon recollection, I charitably concluded that you must mean that outrage against all taste and common sense, a *pasticcio*, I am very ready to allow it to be an absurdity beyond mortal sufferance. I had read an extract from that book which you say is writ by Mr. Greville, and concluded it must be a translation from some French author, and I can scarcely forbear wishing my notion had been right. I believe there might be some good things in it, but, Genius of Britain, forbid that any such frippery kind of writing should grow into fashion amongst us!

I have

I have no news to tell you from the coast more important than that several armed vessels are dispatched from the Downs in quest of two French privateers just out of Calais.—No talk of invasions.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *May* 7, 1756.

YOUR Letter found me yesterday at this place, where we have been almost a week, shivering by the fire-side. I thank you for omitting my half note of censure; it was a peevish and unjust one. But I cannot agree so absolutely to all that you say of the heathen morality. The consequences of flattering it as it has been flattered are fatal, and one cannot live in the world without seeing the ill effects daily. Their morality, so far as it went, was excellent, was admirable in those who sincerely followed the best light they had, and did not shut their eyes against the sun to fix them on their own farthing candle. But their morality was in some essential points defective—they knew not humility—they knew not charity—above all, they knew

knew not that indispensible loyalty to the Supreme Being (whom, though ignorantly, many of them sincerely, and I trust acceptably, worshipped) which forced the conformity of enlightened philosophers to the idolatrous superstitions of their country. These deficiencies ought, therefore, always to be observed, that we may be sufficiently thankful for the blessing we enjoy, while all that is excellent in them ought to have its deserved praise, that we may be duly humble when we consider how unequal is our practice in many points to theirs, or at least to their precepts. Their precepts allowed no deviation from truth. Their practice surely did in the most essential point of all—even that of Socrates himself.

I congratulate you on your near hope of taking wing for the summer. Epictetus and the shirts you will joyfully take leave of. Whether parting with your brother will be so joyous I don't know. But let me congratulate myself also in the hope that next winter (if it is allowable to look so far forward) I may probably see you in town. For what signifies it for a bird to have wings (as a fragment writer would say) if they never carry her out of her nest.

Has Mr. Johnson sent you his new edition of Sir Thomas Browne's Christian Morals? 'Tis a collection of the noblest thoughts, drest in the uncouthest

couthest language possible, for which reason few will read, and half of those despise, a book as superior to Mr. Greville's as Epictetus to Tom Thumb; but indeed even of that book the extracts you have seen must have been unkindly picked, for with some things very faulty, and many very trifling, there are very many passages in it of wit and sentiment, delicacy and good-nature, and two or three strokes of highly diverting humour.

My Lord has read your last Letter, and has made some remarks, which appear to me so forcible, I heartily retract the retractation in the beginning of this about my half note. It was not peevish but just.

I must tell you how I am piqued about Sir George Lyttelton. He goes to Deal to visit you*, and with poor me he will not exchange a word when I meet him at concerts and assemblies. He is in the right, but is it not mortifying? I am sorry his visit was so short; he speaks so much and you so little, that he certainly did not hear you say three words.

* Mentioned in page 145 of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, quarto edition.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 26, 1756.

The fragments, dear Miss Talbot, and the Bishop of Oxford's notes are all safe arrived, and I should have notified it to you a post ago, had not some sad riotous people come and forced me out of my quiet closet to see the proclamation of war, a sad ceremony, for which I had not the least curiosity. You cannot think how immeasurably I am provoked at the French King's title. If he would be graciously pleased to stile himself the Most Punic King, or the Most Mahometan King, or any thing but the Most Christian King, it would contribute much to the tranquillity of my temper, which at present has lost all patience. You will think that the war, which has sunk your spirits, has raised mine. I hope you are all well at Cuddesden, at least as well as people can be in this bleak north-east wind, which has clouded all the smiles of spring, and brought back the dreary gloom of November. You are, however, free from the alarms of invasions. Indeed we talk but little of it at present even here, and the Kentish coast is nearly as quiet as the banks of the Isis. Every body's

body's attention is fixed on the siege of Fort St. Philip, and this unmerciful wind, which stops all intelligence from thence, is a grievous restraint on our curiosity.

So you do not allow my poor heathens to have known either humility or charity. Was Socrates destitute of the first? and are there not fine lessons in very many of the ancient writings of the last, and indeed of both? There is so fine a passage against pride of one kind lying before me, that I must transcribe it, from Phocylides, though I am by no means positive that this authority will do me any great good.

Μη γαυρω σοφιη, μηδ' αλκη, μηδ' επι πλουτω·
Εις θεος εστι σοφος, δυναμος θ', αμα και πολυολβος *.

I have not seen Sir Thomas Browne's Christian Morals, but your recommendation of it will set me to reading his *Religio Medici* again, which I have utterly forgot, except that when I read it I thought it contained many excellent things. The time will come I hope when I shall have more lei-

* Be not proud of wisdom, strength, or riches;
God alone is wise, powerful, and also supremely rich.
But this Phocylides was not the ancient Greek of that name, and it is doubtful whether he was an Alexandrian Jew or a Christian.—Vossius, as quoted by C. Stephens.—Lloyd's edition.

sure

sure for reading than I have been able to find for some years. Not that I have any such passion for a book as to renounce all schemes of conversing with my living friends, from whom it is so extremely probable I might gain a much greater improvement. The journey to London, which you so kindly mention, has often been in my thoughts, and I really have formed an intention, if I live and prosper, of going to town some time next winter, but I do not talk much about it yet.

The zephyrs, I hope, when they do come, will give new life to your walks and rides, and bless you with health and spirits.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *Aug.* 12, 1756.

Your chiding is just, dear Miss Carter, and kind; we are all very well, and I have been greatly to blame. Nay, the true excuse I am going to make will aggravate my fault, as it will shew you I not only neglected to write myself, but that I fraudulently and maliciously kept under lock and key, papers of the Bishop of Oxford and your's, which

which were given me to send you several weeks ago. The pitiable case is this: when he gave them to me I had in the same box a large parcel of law matters to sort and transcribe for my mother, and two or three other things that were absolutely necessary should be done before I could possibly find time to philosophize. I might then have sent them without reading over, but this I could not find in my heart to do. After various interruptions my other matters were dispatched—but then came fine weather, our time of leaving Cuddesden drew near —the garden was so very high in bloom—and a wicked thought came into my head, that when we came to town in August I could read and write full as well as at Cuddesden, and should then have no sweet walks to lose. And therefore, as my country life was to be a short one, I was determined to enjoy it to the utmost, and not waste any of it on employments which could as well be done where roses never bloomed, nor honeysuckle bowers breathed their fragrance. Now all this (so true a picture of human life) I know was wrong, and the more so, as I do not find London itself the place of philosophical leisure, which at this desolate season I expected. Your Papers now shall come as quick as possible, et pour commencer here are some remarks of my Lord's upon a Letter of your's, wrote I know not when, in defence of gallantries.

lantries. The introduction shall come in the next pacquet—Do forgive me; I am really ashamed of myself, and yet had you felt the force of my temptations you would —— not have done as ill, but thought charitably of me.

We find London not at all disagreeable, the weather is cool; St. Paul's Church delightful beyond expression, and many of our friends still scattered up and down the town. At this time of year ceremony is banished, dress, crowds, senseless diversions, and formal visits cease. I left sweet Cuddesden with a very heavy heart. I rejoice to find Miss Mulso is at Deal. As for public affairs I dare not name them, never were they since my memory in so alarming a situation. Captain Young and his wife I admire as I ought; find out for me whether she is in or near this great town, that I may make her a visit. I had great pleasure in seeing in Mr. Richardson's hands an exceeding like picture of you, drawn by Miss Mulso this last summer —Do not be scandalized; he cannot possibly wear it in his snuff box.

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 6, 1757.

By this time, dear Miss Talbot, I hope you have perfectly recovered all the fatigues of your removal, and are quietly contemplating the beauties of the country; unless a north-east wind has as sorrowful an effect upon the landscapes of Oxfordshire, as it has upon the environs of Deal; in this case you may perhaps think no prospect so eligible as a good fire. I long to know before I can know how you all do. I have so long been happy in the possibility of seeing or hearing something of you every hour, that it seems as yet marvellously vexatious to me not to have any intelligence about you for so many days.

I was very lucky in most circumsances of my journey, for in the first place I travelled one half of the way with no other companion but my nosegay, which I should have flung out of the window if it had made any attempt to speak; but no such an attempt did it make. The coachman from time to time bestowed much friendly condolence on my situation, which though it was perfectly unnecessary I received very kindly: and reflecting that he had not

not learned from the philosophers that merely being alone does not imply solitude, I followed the advice of Epictetus, and treated the poor man as Socrates did the jailor. This was indeed a very practicable piece of stoicism, but I found it afterwards a much more difficult task to bring my mind to consider the being crowded with three fat men and a boy, as any kind of festival. I got to Canterbury a little after six, and immediately walked on to Brook, which was seven miles on my way to Deal, where I arrived safely the next day, and had the happiness of finding my family all well.

I hope I shall soon have the pleasure of hearing that you are all well at Cuddesden, and that Mrs. Talbot has left all her incumbrances and perplexities in London, and that she is at leisure to exercise her fancy in dressing flower-pots. I am determined to believe that she often destines, in the kindest manner, a nosegay for her daughter Betty, which will do me a vast deal of good though I never wear it. I have never seen a dish of coffee since I left the Deanery without longing for the nutmeg and the little knife, and regretting the loss of my office. Till I am so happy as to be reinstated in it next winter, in token of my love and friendship, I resign it to Mr. Charles Poyntz, merely however as my deputy, the true original right to be vested entirely in myself. My sincere respects attend the

Bishop

Bishop of Oxford and Mrs. Talbot, and my most grateful acknowledgements to them and you for every instance of your goodness to me in the very happy months I spent in London.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *June* 8, 1757.

Forgive me, dear Miss Carter, that my letter was not beforehand with your's, or that they did not cross on the road! Indeed till to day I had not recovered the fatigue of a long London winter, though what were my fatigues to your's! I sensibly feel your kindness in this as in every other instance, and though it is now late at night I must write and thank you. My mother's distresses are all over, and she eats and sleeps, and begins to dress flower-pots; and you are remembered with the nutmeg every day, and a nosegay appropriated to your remembrance is set in my window daily.

Why did you vanish so on Wednesday morning? I meant to have come down and sat with you at

least a quarter of an hour, and ran away so abruptly merely to come again the sooner. However we should not have had a quarter of an hour after all, so if you spared yourself a pain I am glad you went. But our's now is a short parting compared with the last, nor will I regret the last winter, but please myself with looking forward to the next. Only this I will say of the last, that as I have seen you more, in consequence I love and esteem you more than in any former.

10th. I do ramble about and gather roses a great deal, but am by no means in good spirits. How can one with such a national prospect? You have now done with pitying the poor inhabitants of Prague. Poor Emin was just set out for the Duke's camp before affairs took this bad turn. Lord Northumberland, Lady Anson, Lady Sophia, and Mrs. Montague had all exerted themselves in his favor, so that he went well recommended, on an easy independent footing, and secure if he returns to find the same friendship. He is where he wished, and that heroic spirit will perhaps not dislike difficulties and hardships.

Have you seen a little pamphlet, a Letter to an Officer on travelling on Sundays? I know not whose it is, but I think it may be very useful. Your sheet of Epictetus has passed through many learned hands to day, all of whom were delighted with it,

and

and said it promised well. That is more than the readers did, but I hope they will perform better. I have been dining with twenty people, some of them highly agreeable, and must travel fourteen miles to morrow to dine with other country neighbours. And this is called quiet and retirement! But the weather is fine, the roads are good, and when one has an agreeable day at home one likes it the better. Adieu! I must not miss a pleasant sunset, which I hope you are enjoying in some favorite field. My mother is gone out to air in a postchaise, and left me to ramble about among the honeysuckles and roses.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *July* 16, 1757.

I am very glad to hear the Armenian hero is set out on his expedition; armed and accoutred like the knights of old, by the hands of fair ladies. I heartily hope he will make such a figure as may do honor to their generous advancement of his scheme. When you hear any thing of his proceed-

ings, I beg you will be so good as to mention it, for I am quite interested in his success.

I hope you enjoyed your fine sunset; but much question whether Mrs. Talbot greatly enjoyed the late fine thunder storm. I was rambling about the fields, so had the advantage of observing the whole progress of it through all the varieties of the sky; from the first faint cloud rising out of the sea *, to the deep gloom which at last shaded the horizon on one side, and by the opposition of some remaining beams from the setting sun on the other, formed one of the most beautifully solemn prospects which can be imagined.

This weather has I suppose cured poor Martha of petitioning for a fire, and she is I fancy rather inclined to sing to the sheep and oxen

Would you be so kind and so civil
To come ready roasted here.

How does this kind of weather agree with you, every body here is fainting with heat, but myself, who never quarrel with the sun provided I can walk in the air.

Last night the troops at Barham Downs received orders to decamp, and are to embark on Friday at

* *There ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.* 2 Kings xviii. 44.

Feversham,

Feversham, and are to be joined by several other regiments. Some say they are going to Brest; others to Corsica; to the Baltic; to the Duke; but nobody I really believe knows whither. The soldiers received the news with much cheerfulness, and huzzaing, and told their officers they would conquer for them. The officers have orders to carry nothing but their regimentals. A grievous disappointment this removal to several parties formed for visiting the camp, and great wailing among ladies whose hearts are gone beyond sea—We have had flying reports here for several days of Admiral Holbourne's being beat in North America, but I hope they are without foundation.

I do not at all like the account you give of your spirits; nor am I satisfied with the reason which you give for their being so low. Our present national prospects may be bad, yet not so bad as some others, which God be thanked we have seen happily cleared up: and at all events, beyond good wishes and prayers, what need have people in private life to think at all about them? If you had no other cause for low spirits, I am persuaded that amidst all the "briars of this working-day world" you would enjoy the roses. Your want of spirits is occasioned by want of health, and is not that want of health increased by some degree of extravagance—forgive me the expression, I want another—

ther—in the conduct of the noblest principles; and by perpetually imagining in every thing you do, that something better might be done? You regret the being sometimes obliged to be in a good deal of company; but does not this regret proceed less from the fatigue it gives you, than from a persuasion that your time might be better employed? If you were an angel you might probably employ your time better, than by spending any part of it among human creatures; but in your present situation they have a claim to your attention, and conversing with them would, I apprehend, be a very important duty if the matter was left to your own choice; without doubt it is so where it unavoidably arises from the circumstances in which you are placed, and which God grant may long continue! Some hours of retirement and quiet I hope you do enjoy in the country, and more perhaps, however ardently you wish for them, might be far from doing you any good. It is strange that I should attempt to preach to you, but I have sometimes heard you talk in a way that has led me into saying all this, and if it was not for that diffidence which always prevents my talking much on any subject, I should say a great deal more. If I wanted any argument against the stoical extravagance of virtue being its own reward, your example would be more forcible than ever so many treatises. I cannot help thinking it would

would be of use both to your health and spirits for you to consider any such engagements that may happen to be formed for you, not as a miserable waste of time, but a cheerful amusement that falls naturally in your way. This is placing it in the lowest view, and it might very fairly be represented to much greater advantage. Forgive me if I have been talking absurdly all this time, but I could not help saying something. I am deeply interested in your being well and happy, and alas! find you are neither.

I was glad to hear Mrs. Talbot was gone out in a postchaise, as I am sure it must be more suitable to her own motions than any other earthly vehicle.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *July 29, 1757.*

It would be highly ungrateful, and indeed downright wicked of me, dear Miss Carter, to defer any longer my answer to your truly kind enquiries. I beseech you don't be uneasy about me, you have no occasion, I assure you. 'Tis true I did

I did write to you in bad spirits, and it is my shame as true that being sensible I had expresst them, I accounted for them foolishly and wrongly, and your seeing through the awkward disguise has given you pain. What you say of the quiet acquiescence which private persons ought to have in the fate of nations, and of the cheerfulness with which they ought thankfully to accept whatever good mingles in their own particular lot, (and all have somewhat to be thankful for, I very much) is perfectly just and true. Remember however that this world is not a place for perfect happiness, and that every body must have some "briars" to go through. Weakness of spirits, and quickness of feeling, is a different thing from want of health. My health is I thank God upon the whole very good. Alas! my dear friend, how infinitely better than yours? I scarce know what pain is, every body tells me I look well—so do you; but I eat and sleep; and so you do not. I love to laugh and trifle too as much as you do—perhaps it were as well I did not, since laughing and trifling can scarce ever possibly come in my way. It is not being in *merry*, but in *formal* company that I find fault with, and more than half my life passes in mere empty form. Some of the persons whom you do not know, that I see much the oftenest, are persons

sons of no risibility, of eternal contradiction, and to whom it would be as vain to attempt to do any good, as to expect to learn any thing from them *. Now is *this the duty* of conversation that one owes to human creatures? In *this case* a puppet or a parrot might perform it quite as well, for 'tis merely uttering sounds. For true, for friendly, for improving, or even diverting conversation, I have as high a taste as you, and the most favorite book never detains me a moment from it: nor is my mind even dissatisfied at being called down from its highest flights to converse with a spinner, or give advice to a servant; on the contrary, I can be highly amused with the gossipping chit chat of a country village, which rightly managed has both cheerfulness and use. But even this formal useless company is necessary you say in my situation, and in three words you express with equal kindness, delicacy, and force, the folly and ingratitude there is in finding fault with any circumstance of a situation so uncommonly and so undeservedly happy. But if you saw any one crying in a severe fit of the tooth-ache, would it be a sufficient reason for their not *feeling* the present teizing pain, that the disease was not mortal, that it was not even a broken leg, that they were possessed of riches,

* Now "this worshipful society"—Shakspeare.

friends,

friends, and ever so many more advantages? A reason against their *repining*, or thinking it the heaviest of evils it would be; but if only a sorry tooth aches one must *feel* it, and when one *feels*, though but for the moment, one is apt to complain. The wishing for leisure and retirement is no sign of an unhappy mind; for that mind must have a source of joy within itself, whose cares can be dispersed, and its cheerfulness restored by solitude. I do not say this as a heathen philosopher, however, the source is not my own—But *He* who *feeds his sheep like a shephard* (does not this charming Siciliana now sound in your ears that we heard together) can lead them at all times to *the waters of comfort*. In this world comfort will be always needed, but ask even the gay world (could you ask their *hearts*, and receive an honest answer) whether it is to be found in their *broken cisterns* of perpetual dissipation? You will expect by and by to see my Letter signed E. Young, and dated from Welwyn.

You suppose that when I complained of wanting leisure I had several hours. You forget that you rise three hours earlier than I am allowed to do; that we visit eighteen families at from three to fourteen miles distant, and twenty I believe in Oxford, and are besides eternal riders, walkers, and airers. That I have many correspondents, and cannot for my life write short Letters. And with all this

crowded

crowded together, at first I had scarce *one* hour; but the hot weather kept us at home, gave me leisure, and you see I am quite recovered. This is the fifth letter I have writ to day; I have besides been at church, paid a very long visit this afternoon, gathered gooseberries for half the children in the village, walked a good deal in the rain, given directions to the gardener, given long advice to an honest day labourer, bought six baskets, (that passion still goes on, for I bought two yesterday and two the day before) heard a whole newspaper, finished a flower piece, and from a garret, which I ascended merely to see our servants (Martha and all) pack themselves into a waggon to go a party of pleasure, I have contemplated all the charming prospects round the house with as new a delight, as if I had never seen them before. This now is the history of one of my quiet rainy home days: and now do you think that I indulge melancholy discontented humour, or aim at refinements above mortality? I forgot another of my sublime employments, playing with one of the prettiest little white-footed black cats, and the merriest monkey of a dog you ever saw. My mother's passion is feeding chickens, in this too I share with her, and we study the various characters of the poultry with infinite amusement. Two of our hens are called Cleopa-

tra

ra and Octavia, my mother named them, and with perfect justice, and we divert ourselves with studying how the chickens take after them.

These names put me in mind to ask you how could Mrs. Fielding who is so good a woman make Octavia self-sufficient under sufferings and trials, and not so much as hint the smallest degree of such uninstructed piety as even heathens had, (witness Epictetus) in her and Marcellus, though she gives them for finished exemplary characters? I do not love any dialogues of the dead, because it is representing a true and awful state in generally a false light.—But even in her scene she might have made Cleopatra, like Hamlet's ghost, concealing the secrets of the great deep, and talking only of her past life, but intimating that they were very dreadful, and the consequence *to her* of that life. Fine people are too apt to think they may live very happy, and be very remarkably good without any religion, and Octavia will convince them of it, for her story is enchantingly told, and in some parts made *even me* cry very heartily—*even me* as if I was of adamant.

Oh dear, I have had a short Letter from Emin. He is in the Duke's camp, well received by his Royal Highness, protected by Lord Albemarle, is to be employed, and have a horse of his own. Success attend him and them! And may he in a court

court and a camp preserve his piety and integrity!

This day twelvemonth we were upon the road to London; I am very thankful we are not so to day —though that time which I did not like before past off very well. So proves in general every apprehended evil. I therefore look forward to such phantoms as little as ever I can. Do not tell me now that I am neither well nor happy, nor do not tell yourself so, who are so kindly anxious for me. I am both as much as it is fit one should be, at least as much as it is fit for me. I fear this Letter has too controversial an air, for an answer to one so very kind as your's was, and which did me so much good, but indeed I thank you for it very heartily, and am truly sensible of the kind interest you take in me, and for thinking of me (some small errors excepted which I have been refuting) so very much more highly than I deserve.

I must tell you of a Dutch Latin compliment made to you and your Algarotti, by Brucker in some new book, but I cannot transcribe it. Good night, I am really weary, but have many a square of my ruffle (I am about the second) and many a battle in Sully to fight before I go to bed. 30th. Time is a non-entity. After this last assertion of his lordship's you will not expect me to add much, especially

ally as I have nothing to add but approbation, which you know is not very much my talent. How find ladies and finer gentlemen will approve Greek in the text, I know not, but 'tis no great matter. Do not let Mr. Richardson fright you with a London summer. I think one may excuse you till October at least, perhaps longer; so enjoy the country, my dear friend, and may every blessing attend you there, and every where. I have been rummaging all my drawers, to find a flower or leaf to illuminate these valuable manuscripts, before I return them, but alas the idle child has stuck them all on gauze to make a chimney-blind, and not one is left that is sendable. Pray make haste and send us some more preface or introduction, or translation, and in the mean time I will point away for you. Adieu! ma très chère, forgive all the pragmatical impertinence contained in these sheets.

Mrs.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 12, 1757.

I CANNOT direct a Letter to Cuddesden without thanking you, my dear Miss Talbot, for the favorable account you sent me of your health and spirits, though I am very little capable of thanking you as I ought to do at present.

I cannot write you a diffuse paragraph upon the 37th * page of Epictetus. The chapter is very difficult, and always puzzled me. However, I think there is more than a glimpse of meaning in the passage you mention. Epictetus had been giving an account of the spirited behaviour of a person for whom he had written a submissive supplicating letter. To this the last part of the Letter refers, in which the contrary character is treated with contempt and ridicule. The story about Rufus prevents one from seeing the connection at the first view.

I did as you bid me and went to Canterbury, and it would have done me good if my mind had been at ease; but my dear Harry was taken ill

* Quarto edition. In the last edition it is page 49, &c.

while

while I was there, and I could have no rest till I returned. I found him better, thank God, but Dr. Lynch thinks him in a dangerous way, and very consumptive. My spirits are extremely low, but I endeavour to hope the best. However it please God to determine the event, I hope I shall be enabled to submit as I ought, and be supported under whatever may happen.

Adieu! I can no more just now. My best wishes and prayers attend my excellent friends at Cuddesden, that they may have a healthy and cheerful summer.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Cuddesden, *Aug.* 22, 1757.

I am heartily grieved, my dear Miss Carter, for the distress you are in; it has been continually in my thoughts since I received your Letter; and I please myself with recollecting cases bearing all manner of bad symptoms, which have recovered almost miraculously, and I could name many things that would be of service, but it is absurd when you have good Dr. Lynch at your elbow.

It

It certainly is a comfort to think how many have done well after such attacks; but the only true comfort is in that resigned disposition you so excellently express in looking beyond this world—in looking up to that all-merciful hand that disposes all its events, and dispenses sickness and health with an intention uniformly gracious. In such a situation of mind as your's must be, how irksome would be the rules of stoicism! "You are a poor, paltry, unreasonable wretch, to feel these things; you descend from the dignity of your nature; your only business is to preserve the composure of your mind." —How much happier that you are able to say to yourself, "these feelings, however painful, are a laudable exercise of those affections which were implanted in the human heart by Him who disdained not to take upon him human nature, and to weep for our distresses. By endeavouring properly to regulate them, and humbly to submit to the sorrows I cannot but feel, I am going through the trial he has appointed me for my good, and perfecting that nature which by such trials must be refined, and restored to dignity long ago forfeited. My business is not to preserve a dull present composure, but looks through eternity, and aims at unspeakable rewards. These things which I now suffer are so far real evils that I am made to feel them, and these temporary sufferings are the ob-

jects of divine compassion—and yet in their own nature they are far from evils, since, if it be not wholly our own fault, he can and will make them all result in the greatest good—the greatest good, not only as your philosophers dreamt to a certain unknown and foreign whole, but to every suffering individual that suffers as a Christian ought.

Do let me hear from you again soon, for I cannot be easy when I know you unhappy, and I hope you will be able to write me better news. I thank God we are all well here, and though the times are not, alas, mended, my spirits are.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 27, 1757.

I CANNOT let another Post go by without thanking you a thousand times for your kind solicitude about me. My prospects are, I thank God, greatly mended since I wrote to you last, and all present danger has disappeared; I am therefore thankful for the present blessing, and do not suffer my thoughts to dwell upon any future danger, but comfort myself with considering he will always be

in the hand of the same merciful Providence which has restored him to me now.

I am, and have been for some time, very much and very delightfully full of engagements. My brother and sister Carter are at Deal, my aunt is with them from London, and a relation from Coventry, so we are in full family, and are every day together, which does my heart good; and it gives me no kind of trouble that I sometimes find so large a company rather too powerful an exercise for a weak head. I am not much inclined to quarrel with my head-ache at any time, but I am quite in love with it when it is the consequence of such delightful interesting parties as these *.

The transports are still in the Downs, with a very strong gale to keep them here. They came in about a fortnight ago with the finest wind possible to carry them out, but by some strange mistake or infatuation they loitered away so much of it, that there was not enough left to carry them to Portsmouth, so they were obliged to turn back. People whose hearts are set on an expedition they know nothing about are grievously disappointed at this delay, and are apt to apply—*quos vult perdere*, &c.

* This attachment to her family and fondness for family parties continued with Mrs. Carter to the last, and she was never happier than in collecting together as many of her relations as the table would hold, and sometimes more.

Our public affairs indeed wear a melancholy appearance, but what is our situation compared with that of the poor people whose country is the seat of war? Have you heard any thing of our hero since the battle? I long to know how he behaved *.

Did I tell you I added about a dozen names to my subscription while I was at Canterbury? Among the rest a very fine lady, who, after curtesying to me for several years past, with more civility than I had any title to, and with much more than fine ladies usually show to such awkward-looking folks as me, did me the honour this year to take to me mightily by way of conversation, which she introduced by subscribing in a very handsome manner to *me*, and railing very heartily at the *Stoics*. She is a very sensible and agreeable woman, and much more deeply learned than beseems a fine lady; but between the Spartan laws, the Roman politics, the philosophy of Epicurus, and the wit of St. Evremond, she seems to have formed a most extraordinary system. In walking about the rooms we were joined by one of the most celebrated beauties in the assembly, the study of whose life, as far as can be judged by appearances, has been Mrs. Lenox's sort of coquetry, and there was something

* Probably the battle of Cofeldt, June 13, 1757, or that of Hastenbeck, July 25th.

extremely

extremely diverting to see her listen for a considerable time with the most profound attention to a discourse, which must have been for the most part as unintelligible to her as if it had been delivered in Arabic. To be sure I should have been mighty cautious of holding any such conversation in such a place with a professed philosopher or a scholar, but as it was with a fine fashionable well-dressed lady, whose train was longer than any body's train, I had no manner of scruple *.

Some of my friends had a very providential escape last week at Margate. They were on a party of pleasure in a yatch, and by the rising of the wind were driven on board a large ship; they were for ten minutes under the constant expectation of being lost. I was much affected by the description which I had of it from one of the company, who told me she was fortifying her mind, and forming the firmest resolutions she was able, when they should sink, not to catch hold of her husband, to prevent the hope there might be of his saving himself by swimming.

* The Editor conjectures that this well-dressed and learned lady might be Miss Catherine Sawbridge, afterwards better known by the name of Mrs. Macaulay.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *Dec.* 26, 1757.

As for your fear of coming to town in the dark, in bad roads, let Epictetus, ancient or modern, say what he will to it, it is just and reasonable, so pray take care of yourself. But as for your staying out of town so long, it is abominable and unconscionable. When you feared the being hurried up in August, how prettily you spoke, and prayed to be allowed only till October, or—if that might be—and folks would be so good—and it was not asking too much—why then if you might but be permitted to stay till we came up, it would be so fine!—And now you truly set us all at defiance, and at the end of December talk mighty carelessly about coming up a month hence! I, who took you for a woman of your word, took leave of letter-writing at the time I expected to see you—and now you wonder you have not heard from me! But indeed I should not have found time to write to you now if it had not been for the pleasure of scolding you. Here is Mr. Poyntz gone out of town, (but he will come up sometimes to see you,) and my poor mother is forced to grate her own nutmeg,

nutmeg. Your Armenian hero will be gone if you do not make haste; I think he has not a month longer to stay here. He is in high fashion at present in the beau monde, but not a bit spoilt by it. He enquires after you very often.—I do not think Mr. Richardson near so well this winter as he was last. Romances agree better with him than philosophy *.

You cannot think how much my mother pines and languishes for daughter Betty. As for myself, be content if I receive you peaceably when you do come. However, on the whole, consult your own convenience, and come when it best suits you.

Why must poor logic be so abused? If sophistry is a bad thing, the art which teaches to reason justly and discern fallacy must be useful. But perhaps I am talking ignorantly, and affirming with a controversial air what you never denied. What I mean, however, is that without the aid of rules distinguished by this hard name or other, false heads that want to maintain a bad cause will naturally and spontaneously write sophisms, and therefore it seems right to have an art by which these may be distinguished from true and conclusive reasoning. Adieu! Whether you come or stay, my best and most affectionate wishes attend you, those

* He was the printer of Mrs. Carter's Epictetus. He died in 1761.

of

of the season particularly; and when you do come, a safe and pleasant journey to bring you into the neighbourhood of, &c.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 30, 1758.

PERHAPS I might give you a better account of myself if I waited till to-morrow, my dear Miss Talbot, for my head is very naught to-day. We got to Canterbury a little after six yesterday, and had a tolerable pleasant journey, except that Miss Deane and I found our heads a good deal disconcerted by a very outrageous politician, who, in his zeal for the Habeas Corpus Act, talked so loud, and whisked such a quantity of dust into the coach, that we were stunned and stifled. However, he was a mighty good-humoured kind of man upon the whole, and took a lecture against swearing in very good part; and to do him justice, took several opportunities of praying as heartily as he swore. Miss Deane got into a post-chariot at Canterbury, and I thought it upon the whole much the

the most quiet and reasonable scheme to accompany her, though with some little apprehension, from the cloudiness of the evening, of our being in the dark; but two very spirited galloping coursers conveyed us with perfect ease and safety to Deal in about two hours and a half, and this was by much the most agreeable and least fatiguing.

My removal has been so sudden that I am perpetually apt to mistake where I am, and to consider at what hour I am to go to dinner at the Deanery; but a moment's recollection proves the Deanery to be, alas, absolutely out of my reach. It is not, however, out of the reach of my thoughts, and my most grateful remembrance how much I owe to those excellent friends who have rendered the days they have allowed me to spend there some of the happiest and most improving of my whole life. Be so good as to present my respects and most sincere thanks to Mrs. Talbot and his Grace for all the instances of their goodness to me. I can say nothing that will half express what I owe to them and you. O dear, how I envy the black cat in walking from room to room after the Archbishop * and Mrs. Talbot!

* Dr. Secker was translated from the see of Oxford to that of Canterbury in April 1758, and of course vacated the Deanery of St. Paul's.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

St. Paul's, *June* 2, 1758.

ALL peace and happiness to you, dear Miss Carter, at that home whither you have so long, alas, that it should be with so much reason! have sighed to return. I hope you will not feel the worse for this detestable town. At present we feel you sadly wanting to us, though, I thank God, we go on tolerably. I hope you kept quiet at Canterbury in all that blessed rain, which has refreshed and revived every thing. Yesterday we had a most delightful airing through the two Parks and Brompton lanes, and were safe lodged before the thunder, to my mother's great comfort. To-day she has been peculiarly lonely, as even poor puss is locked up in the cellar, to pursue her proper avocation of mouse-catching. If I had thought of it sooner I would have sent and borrowed your tippet.

I saw the new Dean installed to-day; 'tis a pretty sight, and was to me an affecting one, but I endeavoured to be as properly affected by it as I could, with thankfulness for the past, cheerful acquiescence in the present, full trust in the future, and

and sincere good wishes to the new Dean and his long-loved church.

Did you observe yesterday with what punctual kindness the wind whisked round to the N. E.? and the fleet is accordingly sailed. Providence protect and guide it! and with as little harm to others as can possibly consist with our own safety! Your kind Note and your kinder Letter did me the good you intended, and do not be in pain for me; I shall be mended, not hurt, by the ugly but true likeness I saw of myself on Sunday night in that faithful glass. I was immoderately vexed to find you flown; for, full of one subject only, I had deferred talking to you of fifty others, and one I am sure I should not have omitted, my sincerest thanks for your undeserved goodness to me, and for all the good you have done my mother. I cannot stay to write more now, at least not to write half I want to say. A Letter which you dropped I enclose; need I say it has never been opened? You left also a glass and two Dodsleys, but these I cannot enclose. Adieu! Every happiness attend you! You will always have the gratitude and affection of your's, &c.

Miss

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Cuddesden *Dec.* 10, 1758.

I FOUND it impossible to write to you again before we left London. We got hither last Wednesday, safe, I thank God, and well, though we had had frights and difficulties by the way; but these, happily over, are only additional causes for thankfulness. My mother is very good, and keeps herself quiet; indeed 'tis at present the best plan for us both, so as yet we decline going to Oxford. This paradise looks as lovely in itself as ever, but the joy one used to feel in coming to it was more, I find, from the prospect of six or seven months of cheerful retirement and quiet than from any particular beauty in the place. Half unfurnished, and not half inhabited, the tie just dissolved that has bound me to it for twenty years*, this sweet place does not seem to me so comfortable as even Lambeth. It is my duty now to love *that* place, and a fondness for *this* is no longer any

* During which time Dr. Secker had been Bishop of Oxford.

part

part of my business.—I could have cried when the first morning dawned upon me here, and I was waked by the pretty birds as in former years, because that first waking most other summers used to be so delightful, and brought with it now so different a train of thoughts, so different a prospect for months to come.—But this folly was soon checked, and, I thank God, I think it is now conquered. I am thankful for the unnumbered moments so undeservedly happy, so happily improving, that I have been permitted to spend here; I am still more thankful that this removal has nothing *really* melancholy in it, but indeed otherwise; that the same essentials of happiness are still continued to me; and implicitly I trust my future years to the guidance of the same all-merciful almighty hand. You may possibly not hear from me again till we are settled somewhere or other, and 'tis really become indifferent to me where, so it but please God we are all well and together; however, whenever the *where* is fixed, it shall be my study to find out its beauties and advantages, for some one may find out every where if one has but a will. We had the comfort of hearing from his Grace to-day that he is quite well. His intelligence makes one more than ever anxious to hear news from the fleet, as our people had begun but not finished landing. All looks hopeful at present.

I have

I have seen the poor lad's father, for whom Lady Anson is so amiably concerned. He is grieved, resigned, and thankful—in short, though a poor day-labourer, there is somewhat in his character and behaviour quite superior and exemplary, and such as would shame many who have had very superior advantages. I have looked in Dodsley *, to see if any events had happened between your leaving town and this time worth mentioning. I well know I wished you back again more than once. My mother was during that week at Croydon, at Lambeth, and sundry times at our beloved church †, yet some days she was very low. She dined one day at Lady Anson's, who gave her a little dinner at her own early hour with all that kindness which she ever shews her. We saw Lord Northumberland twice, and dear Mrs. Montagu not once, though I love her twice as well as usual for the justice she does to you, though, she must be blind not to see and feel your merit.

I intend to have sent your glass in a letter, but his Grace on opening it found it cracked in various places, it was therefore resolved nem. con. that I might pocket it for my own use; so here it is, pretty thing, looking at all the Cuddesden views. When

* His Memorandum-book.

† St. Paul's, which they were now to leave.

you

you come and claim it you shall have it. "Henrietta*" has been useful to us here, but there are many things in it that I dislike, and that tally with my opinion of the writer. That brother is execrable.—There are bits of pride and sauciness in Henrietta, and reflections in one place tending to ridicule the belief of a particular Providence, to which I object very greatly.

How like am I to Miss Woodby. I have run on without asking one single question about yourself, or seeming to care about you. Indeed that is not the case, and heartily glad I shall be to hear that you are well and happy, and that no unpleasant impressions remain on your mind from any disagreeable occurrence of the winter. I hope some impressions that it has made on my mind will never be effaced.

* A Novel, which the Editor remembers to have seen many years ago, but has no recollection of the writer's name.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 16, 1758.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear Miss Talbot, for both your Letters. I rejoice to find Mrs. Talbot so well recovered as to be able to take her journey; but what art have you invented to fix her volatility, and keep her quiet without any assistance either from me or the black cat? No offence I hope to the black cat that I take the liberty of naming myself first, from the merit of a prior title. You were very good to wish me back again that evening when I so strangely ran away, but it was so late I despaired of seeing you again. I longed to stop Mrs. Talbot, and speak to her as I followed her through the passage; but my heart failed me, I was dispirited and good for nothing, and thought it the best plan to walk quietly away.

I never doubted but you could be *resigned* in parting with Cuddesden, and a mind like your's in its future views will always be *happy*; yet this, alas! is consistent with much painful feeling for the present. I hope from your last Letter that your spirits are better than they were, but I am quite impatient

impatient for you to be absolutely settled in some place or other, as I am persuaded your mind will then be much more at ease. May Providence render this change in every respect happy to you all. I have never thanked you half so much as I ought to have done for a sight of those charming volumes, which I have read with so much delight, and I hope not without improvement; at least it must be most grievously my own fault if I have. How much I am obliged to you for furnishing me an opportunity of extending my acquaintance with you so many years farther back than I could otherwise have enjoyed it. Whether I was sufficiently sensible of this advantage I know not, and whether I did not receive as much pain as pleasure from it, while I was uneasy at the present, and dispirited about the future; but this was an unreasonable disposition of mind; it is now so far over that I am peaceful and contented, and I do not wish to be any thing more.

I heartily thank you for loving Mrs. Montagu the better on my account, and yet you know not half the goodness with which she treated me; there was something in it so much beyond what I had any reason to expect, that there seemed to be a kind of vanity in the repetition of it, and so in the spirit of refining I kept it quietly to myself, and never, when I could properly avoid it, mentioned her

name. I know not by what contrivance it was, but she certainly found out some art of making me look much less like a fool than I usually do, which I was very glad of for her sake, though it is a point about which I am grown very indifferent on my own account.

I did not think you would like Henrietta a bit more than I find you do; it was not a book to please you. Since I came home I have picked up at Mrs. Gambier's the Memoirs of Anne of Austria, in a vile and most unintelligible translation; yet I keep reading on, and am much inclined to love Madame Motteville a great deal better than her heroine, against whom I have just now an irreconcileable quarrel for leaving her to all the dangers and miseries of a siege.

You are very good to flatter me with the agreeable vision of coming to London next year, and merely as a vision I enjoy it, without putting myself out of humour by the reflection that it is nothing more.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

St. James's Square, *Aug.* 15, 1758.

When you so kindly and so considerately, my dear Miss Carter, desired me not to write till we were settled, I thank you in my heart for the indulgence, but thought I should make very little use of it, but so it has happened that till this day I have not had any spare time, not but that I have lounged away many a half hour over Ben Jonson, Marivaux's Spectateur François, and any such idle books as chance presented me, but then I was so wearied and worn out, that such waking naps were much better for me than writing. Even now we are not settled, though tolerably quiet for the present, being removed from all places in the world where we have any thing to do. Of poor dear Oxfordshire we have taken leave; our next favorite place St. Paul's we have also quitted; our last week there was as disagreeable as packing and bustle in warm weather could make it. His Grace had a slight fit of the gout two days after he returned from his visitation, and we cannot be sufficiently thankful he was not seized with it at some inn

on the road. And where do you think we are now? Not at Lambeth, though there we were for a whole week, but it was found absolutely necessary to open some drains that had been neglected for several years, and Lady Grey insisted we should come and inhabit her house in St. James's Square, as the air of the Palace would for some time be much tainted, and consequently unwholesome, so here we have been for a fortnight, and a very agreeable house it is, so cool, and so comfortable, it has none of the inconveniencies of a town house. I only wish for Lady Grey, for this house recals to me our younger years when we were almost constantly together, and met with more mirth, than the cares of the world allow either of us now.

I am afraid you have more than wondered at my long silence, especially at this time when you required the amusement of a friend's Letter, as much as your heart rejected races and mixed companies; but you well know how deeply I have felt for you *, but on such subjects there is no talking; but doubtless *he who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows*, and in whom your trust, had given you that conso-

* On account of the death of her eldest brother's wife; an amiable young woman to whom she had been much attached from her childhood, and on whose education she had bestowed much and well requited pains.

lation that he alone can give! *In the world all* must *have tribulation,* but he who created and overcame that world commands his disciples to be of *good cheer.* His words are the only source of comfort to an afflicted heart, and every affliction so supported draws us nearer to him. By this time I will hope your spirits are mended and your friends recovering from their distress. Let me hear from you soon, and I promise to become a more punctual Correspondent for the future, for methinks the great advantage of going to a new place, is the breaking off old habits that were faulty, and setting every thing, one's time, and all in such exact order, that proper time and place may be allotted for each. These are the cabinets, the paintings, and gildings, and all the fine fittings up on which I have set my heart. My large room is abundance of leisure which I hope to find at Lambeth, but which by the interruptions of a London life was all cut into closets and passages, and those were all filled with rubbish too. This room must be supported upon pretty strong arches and pillars of useful and necessary employments, serious studies, and domestic attentions—else the weight of it would crush one very soon. Between these at regular distances hang the portraits of friends, all drawn in the truest, yet most favorable likenesses (not by that dauber London spleen as they used to be) and under them on pedestals

tals of marble engraved with benefits, (there is sand at their feet to scribble momentary vexations) must be citrons, oranges, and such pleasant evergreens to breathe out an agreeable odour, and a grateful perfume: some roses too with as few thorns as possible, and here and there a sprig of myrtle and bay. In proper places must be brackets for ornaments of ingenious fancy, and secretaires to hold amusing books and materials for writing Letters regularly and duly where they are wished. In this room every thing must be so ordered, that every necessary trifle shall add a grace to it by the taste and propriety of their placing—A wonderful fine allegory this! to be sure I am dropped asleep in some cabinet warehouse, and am telling you my dream. However 'tis a morning dream and has some truth in it; for I am sensible that of late years I have slatterned away both my time, temper, and spirits, and I am seriously determined to mend all by a new train of life.

You will be glad to hear we are better pleased with Lambeth. The house proves much less inconvenient than we first thought it. The rooms, now they are a little cleaned, and partly furnished, look better and pleasanter. And the garden will soon be made comfortable, the green ponds will be made clean and clear, and by another year (if one may look so far) the want of flowers and fruit will be supplied. Oh

dear,

dear, you would be mighty fond of a good old woman who walked one morning early from Piccadilly to St. Paul's on purpose to convey the black cat by water to Lambeth, for fear in the hurry of moving puss's safety should have been neglected.

Have you seen in the papers that Mr. Mence has got a city living of £150 a year? it is in every respect agreeable to him, and he is the happiest and most grateful of men, so that Lady Anson's kindness is well-bestowed. What celestial anthems did they give us the last week we spent at St. Paul's! "*But of that joy as of a gem long lost*"—"*speak we no more.*" The loss of it does really go near me, for I cannot form to myself the idea on this side heaven of any delight equal to fine and solemn choir service, except it be Milton's *vernal delight and joy* from a true country retirement on a fine day, which tunes the whole mind to a still superior harmony. Farewell to that too! Be it so, I have enjoyed both these delights by turns for many years, and must try now whether the same happy disposition may not be raised, only with a little more effort, by air less pure, and music less enchanting. We have seen our Cuddesden successor twice, and think she deserves to go to that prettiest happiest of places. There is something in her manner peculiarly easy, lively, natural, and obliging.

I hear

I hear poor Mr. Richardson is ill, but have not seen him this age. Emin is gone to the Hague in his way to Prince Ferdinand—he enquired much after you.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Aug.* 18, 1758.

I was, my dear Miss Talbot, much pleased by your kind Letter, we are much as we were when I wrote last; I now walk a good deal, it does me good, and is a reasonable and proper relief. But going to Canterbury races was quite another thing, though the proposal was kindly meant, and made by good sort of people, but surely it proves that even good sort of people may live in the world till they lose all feeling. Such a method of consolation perhaps may be very consistent with all established forms, and it may be a very fashionable maxim that people should forget their friends, and drive even the thoughts

thoughts of mortality out of one's head as fast as possible.

> As from the wing the sky no trace retains,
> The parted waves no furrow from the keel,
> So dies in human hearts the thoughts of death,
> Ev'n with the tender tear which nature sheds
> O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave*!

To indulge the long continuance of a useless grief is certainly wrong and inconsistent with the duties of life; but on the other hand to hurry off every tender sentiment for those who are removed from us, to stifle every good impression which sorrow naturally raises in the mind, in the racket of the world, and thus to frustrate the gracious intention of Providence in all afflictions, seems to be a practice strangely inhuman and unchristian.

I rejoice to hear that Lambeth makes a more agreeable appearance to you than it did, and I am persuaded it will still improve. Most places perhaps owe their beauty or unpleasantness, more to the light or darkness that is thrown upon them from one's own imagination, than to any thing inherent in themselves. Even our favorite Deanery of St. Paul's in its own situation, would I believe to any

* Young, Night 1.

impartial

impartial spectator appear most heartily dismal; and such a spectator would probably think the black limes and the under ground walks not half so cheerful as Lambeth gardens. I do however heartily regret for you, your beautiful Cuddesden wild walks, your fields, and hedge-rows.——Yet the fairest landscapes alas! can raise very little sense of "vernal delight and joy" in a heart not at ease, a truth which during this melancholy summer I have sadly experienced.

I much wished Emin where he is by this time, with Prince Ferdinand, who, if one may credit the accounts of his behaviour after the victory, seems to be truly a christian hero. I lately heard our poor friend greatly ridiculed and censured as a mad and designing enthusiast, who was forming a scheme, instead of freeing his country, to usurp a kingdom for himself. I did what I could to vindicate his character, and was heartily vexed to hear it treated with so much contempt. I believe, this account of him was given by some gentlemen in the army: if it has arisen from Emin talking in any such strain, though it is to be hoped merely in a bantering way, it is a pity but he should be cautioned against it.——Did you ever read the life of Jacob Almanzor King of the Moors, at the time when they conquered Spain? The character was

quite

quite new to me, and is certainly one of the greatest and best in all history. He closed the glories of a most righteous and beneficent reign by resigning the crown to his son, and retiring to the enjoyment of a learned leisure, and the exercises of devotion*. Yet this great and good prince who was the happiness of his own subjects was the greatest plague to the world besides, and fought above fourscore battles.

I fancy Lady Grey will not be sorry when you get where you have *something to do*, as the having nothing to do, should you stay much longer where you are, may be a strong temptation to you to turn the house in St. James's Square out of window. Seriously I long to hear you are settled.

* Moreri gives a different account of him, and quotes Arabian authors for it. He says, that after leaving Spain he broke his word with some Moorish rebels whom he put to death; and being reproved for it by a marabout, he wandered over the world, and died a baker at Alexandria.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 22, 1758.

It is not more strange than literally true, my dear Miss Carter, that in all this immense long while I have never had time to sit down comfortably and write to you; and now my conscience smites me, and I wish I had sat down *un*comfortably and writ you but one line to say that thank God we are all well; I fear you will imagine this new situation has turned my brain, but both in my head and heart you keep very faithfully the place you so well deserve. The family begins to be a little in order. My mother and I have for some weeks been settled in the pretty apartment you allotted us, and we do not find any inconvenience in so frequently crossing the great hall. Our workmen are not yet gone, and the garden improves very fast, it already looks quite pretty, and the field you admired, is now improved by two cows and a calf.

Since I began this Letter it has been delayed a week by my not being well, but the fever is gone, and a slight cough only remains. His Grace and

my

my mother intended to day for the first time to have taken a quiet dinner with me in the St. Paul's room; Lady Grey who came to town only last night, brought her little girl, and at our earnest request increased our dinner party. In the morning I saw Mr. Richardson and Lady Anson. I tell you all this to set your heart at rest, for you may be sure my mother would not let me see so much company if she did not feel that I was a great deal better. However I still keep to this apartment, a low diet, and go to bed at nine o'clock.

I had a thousand things to say to you but they are lost. Poor—— called on me just before he left this inhospitable climate to go look among rocks of ice for the heart of his Princess, which is certainly locked up there by enchantment, (as I have formerly read in those true histories the Fairy Tales) else she could never have been so cruel as not to favour him with a single line. I don't know whether I told you that in the summer he brought me a volume of Carlo Maggi for her, which I, that she might be humane at least by proxy, accepted on her behalf, and writ her name in it immediately. She will have it some time or other, and I shall leave it to her own conscience and gratitude whether she will add the name of the donor.

You may be sure I honour you for not going to Canterbury races, as much as I pity those who in the

the gaiety of their hearts can think of such a giddy scene as a proper relief for a distressed mind. But I was sorry to hear that even Miss Mulso could not draw you thither, as I thought a few days now and then to vary the scene by visiting a friend like Miss Mulso, you would return not only the better yourself, but better able by that means to enliven the friends to whom you are so necessary at Deal; I ought to have written to you much oftener these heavy months; but settling such an establishment as our's is at present (consisting of forty in family) has truly taken up every minute of my time; we are now seemingly settled, and should live—If it were not for the neighbourhood of that vile London—A very quiet collegiate life.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 3, 1758.

Your silence, my dear Miss Talbot, would not have remained so long undisturbed had I not from other hands heard you were all well, and going on in the regular rotation of getting settled.

As

As for the supposition of your head being turned it never once entered my thoughts: for though I am in general convinced that the human head is a mighty versatile kind of thing, I do not think it fair to make any particular application from a mere negative proof. So till you furnish me with some convincing argument to the contrary, I shall charitably conclude that your head and heart remain in the same situation as they were when I left London. I sincerely thank you however for the confirmation you are so good as to give me of this opinion.

I cannot be quite easy about your health, though you tell me you are so much better; I will not have you write me a Letter; send only a single line to say how you do. I am heartily glad to find Mrs. Talbot and you are settled in that apartment where I so much wished you. I had much altercations on the subject with the Dean of Canterbury, who expressed terrible notions about crossing the great hall. Such a task may, indeed, appear formidable to him, poor man, but I am persuaded can be nothing to the activity of Mrs. Talbot. I am in very little pain about her getting cold, for it must be a very nimble wind that overtakes her before she is at the top of her own stairs. I am in much more apprehensions about you, for as you will certainly

mainly be left behind, there seems to be no small danger of your being lost.

I have been at Canterbury two or three times since you heard I could not be drawn there, and last week spent three days with Dr. Lynch's family. Indeed it was more from absolute necessity than inclination that I prevailed on myself to move. I was fallen into such a state of spirits as began seriously to alarm me, and I determined to follow your advice, and take every opportunity that fell in my way of varying the scene, and I feel I am the better for these little exursions. Mrs. Underdown is upon the whole much better and more cheerful than one could possibly have expected after so dreadful a stroke. She has every comfort in my brother that it is possible for him to give, were he her own son: and indeed the duty and tenderness with which he treats her is almost beyond example.

You will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Montagu has undergone a most painful and dangerous illness. I hope she is now so well recovered that nothing fatal is to be apprehended, but she has been on the very borders of the grave. She was reduced to this extremity by a remarkable accident, the spilling a great quantity of eau de luce into her eye and her mouth during a fainting fit. She proposes

poses to be in London the beginning of next month.' I hope you will see her often, as I am persuaded the better you are acquainted with her, the more you will be convinced of the excellency of her character.

I hoped some degree of charity for poor London would have entered into the general scheme of reformation you mentioned some time ago; and am sorry to find you retain your ancient enmity to it. Indeed I cannot think the neighbourhood of London will do you any harm; it must surely be good both for Mrs. Talbot and you, to vary your quiet collegiate life.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 9, 1758.

I have a little deferred answering your kind enquiries, my dear Miss Carter, that I might be enabled to give a satisfactory one. I thank God I can now do so; for though my disorder has been longer and of more consequence than I supposed when I writ you last, I have now better authority than my own to assure you it is wearing away.

After this I may confess without alarming you, that I have at five different times lost 37 oz. of very sisy blood, have enjoyed the amusement of two large blisters, in short gone through all the discipline that a poor animal must who is in the hands of two physicians. I now sleep well, am very hungry, and generally in good spirits, nor does my strength seem very much impaired. How thankful ought I to be for such an easy pleasant fit of illness, which has only given me a new opportunity to experience the unwearied kindness of the best of friends, and procured me a degree of leisure for which you know I have long sighed. I am only grieved for the concern and trouble I have given; may returning health enable me to make a due return! How are these things made not only supportable but easy to us by a merciful Providence, which at a distance would seem most alarming! He, who while he vouchsafed to dwell on earth, with such exquisite compassion relieved every infirmity that applied to him for relief, is equally near, is equally tender to his infirm creatures now, and one instance of that tenderness is his command to them *to take no* (anxious) *thought for tomorrow.* Had any one told me five weeks ago, "You are to have a pleuratic fever, to be five times blooded, twice blistered," I should have been frightened out of my wits; whereas, day by day has

has passed on mighty well, and brought me towards a better state of health than I have enjoyed for years. Such are thy mercies, O Lord; make me, I beseech thee, grateful for them!

Your racketing schemes for me are over for this winter, as I am not to go out of an evening, and now London is become an inoffensive and useful neighbourhood. I fear poor Mrs. Montagu has suffered much more in her illness than I have done. I shall rejoice to hear she is safe and well in Hill-street. Black puss has never once been to nurse me!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Jan.* 1, 1759.

Indeed, my dear Miss Carter, I ought long ago to have let you know of my amended health, and if my silence has caused you any uneasiness I am much to blame. But I rise very late, and when up am stupid, heavy, and good for nothing. I take the air every day, and am, thank God, gradually getting better. From six to seven has been my best hour for writing, but one Letter

at a time is as much as I can accomplish without over fatigue; and I have often Letters of absolute necessity that cannot be put off. And last Post Emin hindered my writing to you, by dropping in to make an evening visit. I believe you have not heard from (oh fie upon me!) since his return, but perhaps you may have heard of *him* from Mrs. Montagu. He is as good and as oriental as ever, though much more than ever in fashion amongst the fine folks. One new acquisition he has made is the very particular favour and protection of a a very great Countess*, to whom he was most strongly recommended by his German friends. He has also had a very gracious audience of the great man †, who did not see him last year; but succeed in his schemes or not, he seems now determined to go towards his own country early in the spring. He was particularly entertaining last night; talking of the management of states and kingdoms, the necessity there was of watching evils in their first growth, and by what might seem inconsiderable attentions preventing in time very great inconveniencies.—What, says he, if I was to take charge of a clock, should I be satisfied with winding it up now and then, and just regulating the great wheels? No, I would examine every little spring, and chain,

* Lady Yarmouth. † Mr. Pitt.

and

and hair, and see that there was not a bit of dirt or dust in any of them.—After much discourse of this kind, he sat down and amused me with one or two genuine Eastern tales and poems, as he had heard them repeated by some Persians he travelled with, when they sat down to pass the heat of the day on the banks of a river.—Now I am sure all this will plead my excuse for last Post. For an hour or two in the day I endeavour to make myself not quite useless, the rest, alas, is given up to care of health and indolent amusement. A wonderful pretty little white cat has abundantly supplied the place of ungrateful black puss, though I cannot say her sentiments are at all nobler, since the little wretch, who was bred in the stable, is so proud on being admitted up stairs, that the postillion (a mighty good little boy) has complained, with most melancholy meekness and affection, that "puss is grown above him." This, and half an hour's piquet to save my mother's eyes after supper, are my most *rational* amusements, and we often want you to decide a knotty point of the game, and for fifty other things daily do we wish for you. I have run over a heap of most ridiculous French books, and think with real grief how shameful it is that people should sit down to study such trash in perfect health—in *real* illness they would be a still more unfit occupation, and I can scarce excuse myself for turning

over

over so many, even in the state of languor in which I am, and which makes me unfit for application, and under a necessity of amusement. Indeed many of them are so vile that a page at a time was quite enough.

The town was much alarmed a week ago by the blowing up of a large magazine of powder at Hounslow; we felt the shock here, and when one had heard of it from many other places, one was apt to conclude (and the rather as the day before had been very warm) it was an earthquake; but to me it seemed at the moment different from what I had experienced before, though I persuaded myself the next day into fancying it much the same. I am ashamed to send you such a trifling Letter, and shall be chid by you if I write more. How sincerely I wish you every blessing of this happy awful season you well know, and I am too self-interested not to wish you many happy new years. Your two friends here join in every possible good wish. Oh how we long for you!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 23, 1759*.

On seeing, dear Miss Carter, your kind Note of enquiry to my mother, I wish I had writ last night, but we had had a visitor, and when I took up the pen I found writing would not do me any good. To consider you as absent, and absent enough to be corresponded with, was not an agreeable thought, so I laid it aside, and pleased myself with considering how quick Mr. Forster was back on Saturday, how very near you was to us, and how strictly you are bound by your promise to make use of that neighbourhood, and call upon us for a day or two at least very often.

I am sure my mother will be too lazy to attempt answering any of the fine things you say to her, for you know she hates writing as much as she loves you—and that is hating it to a great de-

* Miss Talbot's ill health, and the six months which Mrs. Carter passed with her, partly at Lambeth and partly at Bristol, occasioned this gap in the Correspondence. Several Letters occurred in this time from the Archbishop and Mrs. Talbot to Mrs. Carter, which are omitted.

gree

gree indeed. Besides, I believe, (for to say truth, it was brought to me first, and looking only at the hand I opened it hastily, and she being a mile off across the hall, has not yet seen it) she will think you rather deserve to be chid for making any speeches at all, when all the thanks are so evidently due on our side. Indeed there is no expressing all the comfort and good you have been to us this last summer, and who in the world but you would have attempted giving it with such a melancholy prospect before you as we had at setting out six months ago.

On Saturday night I employed myself in the only way that could possibly draw off my attention from the coach that was just driven away. You will easily guess it was writing to Mr. Ford, but when my mother came in at supper-time she was quite scandalized to find the poor Letter so dull and stupid as she did. See now of what mischief you are the cause, for had I not just parted with you the Letter would certainly have been facetious and ingenious. I have slept well, and walked in the sunny walk between my windows and the laundry, and had a nice ride to-day, and assure you I feel very comfortable, but I still sup *chez moi*. My poor mother says her airing to-day was *very* different from Saturday's.

I have

I have read through all your books, and am undone for more, but will have them of nobody's chusing but your's; neither will I write to you again till I see you. You will not, I am sure, be so cruel as to keep me long in this unemployed state; besides, I have an hundred things to talk to you about, and a quarter of a dozen of pretty children to introduce to you. I pitied you this morning, when I was riding under a beautiful blue sky, and saw the immense thick smoke you was breathing in the city. Did you see the fine Aurora yesterday evening? I must leave off, or you will scold. Adieu!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 1, 1759.

Fie upon you, my poor Miss Carter, for not getting to sleep till three o'clock, when you was to be up again at torch-light! I hope my silly Note had no share in this guilt. My *tranquille insipidité* allowed me to sleep till six as well as if you had been to stay on as long as I wished you. I then drank a cup of ass's milk to your good journey, and composed into another nap, during which I gave

I gave a French ambassador much good advice about signing a lasting peace, and waked quite angry at my own impertinence. My mother called me to chapel, looking very *unkit*, as she says her house does without you. Since the French are not come, nor I hope likely to come to the Kentish coast, I am glad your journey was not delayed.

6th. Thank God we all go on very well here. Mrs. Govers and my glass flatter me every day. But what do you think? I have been at Mrs. Montagu's door and in Mrs. Pitt's dressing-room. She complains that Lord Lyttelton has made some mischief between you. Your little deputy *librairienne* does very well. I thank you for the Barrow, and in idle hours, for the French plays; but I pine and die to see Mrs. Montagu, and cannot.

12th. My thanks to Leghorn are happily dispatched, with a most excellent Letter from Dr. Monsey to Emin, full of wit, religion, and kindness, expressed in a way so original and natural that we honour him for it very much, but he does not know I have seen it. You will not let me write long—which is a sore temptation, but I will not be perverse. Continue to take care of yourself, to sleep well, and to send me word faithfully how you do. My mother sends more fine speeches than you would allow me to add, so adieu!—Mrs. Smythe has got your room at my mother's.

When did you hear from Charlotte? Why should you not, for your own amusement and her good, write a few stanzas, or translate somewhat of Maggi for her, the long Curilla? Poetry is striking, and she loves it. Once more adieu.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Nov.* 27, 1759.

Is there any very solid reason, my dear Miss Talbot, that because I desire a very short Letter you should take a whole fortnight to consider whether I should have any Letter at all? I rejoice extremely at the good account you give of yourself. In time, I hope it is very probable, you may arrive at the same dignity of size with Mrs. Govers and the dairy-maid; however, *en attendant*, to reconcile you to your present state, you may take my word for it, that there are people who move up and down, to the full as independent and as portly as the said Mrs. Govers and the dairy-maid, without being of half the use in the world as you are by the fire-side in your great arm-chair. I wish Mrs. Talbot joy of her visitor; as she would not come

come till after I was gone, I hope she will not go away till after I return. I mention coming to town as if I had any fixed plan, which I really have not, but you see it is in general in my mind,

No news of the French fleet yet, except a Letter which I had last night from Canterbury, informing me that it was within sight of the Goodwin Sands, which proves that the good people of Canterbury have much better eyes than we have at Deal, who have discovered no such phænomenon, and it is to be hoped never may, We begin to be impatient for news, and to apprehend that Sir Edward Hawke and Conflans are like boys at thrust*. If you hear any thing about them do not fail to send me word. Are the Magdalen Letters you mention printed, and what is the title? I wish Mrs. Montagu had determined the date of that *premier jour*, in which she was to write to me, more precisely, whether it was the *premier jour* of the next year, or the *premier jour* of the next century; for I have not heard a word from her yet, and begin to be uneasy at her silence, fearing she may be ill again.

* The engagement of the 20th of this same month soon shewed the French Admiral that Sir Edward Hawke's attack was (as Falstaff says) "no boys play."

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 27, 1759.

Mrs. Montagu did only say she would write to you very soon. *Au premier jour* was a phrase of my own. I wish I could learn to be literal, for by varying phrases and turning periods one transgresses against truth before one is aware of it; and I have a very serious obligation to you (among many others) for having made me attend to this bad habit, and try to correct it. I cannot say I have made any great amendment yet, but at least I catch myself in it, and am vexed at myself almost every day. Now when you have told me of it formerly, I did not so much as suspect myself. Indeed I am thankful every day for this quiet and retired life, where having neither cares, nor business, nor amusements out of myself and my own room for many hours of the day, I have the finest opportunity imaginable for rooting many weeds out of my own bad soil, that through years of neglect are grown wilder than I was aware of. May I be enabled to go through the task, and answer perhaps that very purpose of mercy, for which I have been so providentially restored to life and health.

I say

I say *health*, for my looks are now quite good, my spirits free, my sleep—in short, every thing as you would wish it; and though we have breakfasted in the gallery all this cold weather; been constantly to chapel, and ride out in all weathers, yet I have not had one cold.

We have a learned man in the house, Dr. J. B.*, that edified you at Eton, and he has at last beat it into my head what an adverb is, and we have agreed that you have been all your life in a great error in eating that strange jumble of substantives, *plumb-cake*, when the adverb *plumby* is plainly the right thing. By my writing nonsense you will conclude there is no news. Mr. Duff is trying (that was last Monday or Tuesday, when his Letter was writ, which arrived but to-day) to get out of Quiberon Bay, where he had penned up the transports; Conflans and his fleet were some leagues to the S. W. of Belleisle, and it was hoped Sir E. Hawke would get up to them, but the wind was perverse to them all.

The book you enquire after is "The History of some of the Penitents in the Magdalen House."

* Dr. John Burton, an eminent scholar and very good man. Among his relaxations from deeper studies, he wrote the elegant Latin poem called Sacerdos Parœcialis Rusticus, in 630 hexameter verses; and a Tour in Surry, in Greek, and in Sussex, in Latin prose; with a Critical Letter concerning the Greek Language, addressed to Dr. Bentham, prefixed to them.

I think

I think that is the title of the very pretty book we have been reading. I know not who writ it, but it is at least a very good likeness of Mrs. Fielding.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 30, 1759.

You depend upon me for news, and I wish I could send it you to-night, for, God be praised, it is great and good. In all human probability the intended invasion is quite at an end, and you may wander on the sea-shore with perfect safety. Sir Edward Hawke dispatched his own Captain, Campbell, last Saturday, who arrived at two this morning with the welcome intelligence. On Tuesday the 20th, Duff, who has behaved incomparably well, was within half an hour of being taken by the French fleet, twenty-one ships of the line, when Sir Edward came up with twenty-three. This was about two in the afternoon, and had the daylight been longer our victory would probably have been more complete. One eighty gun ship struck and was taken, she had 1000 men; another struck, but night coming on the enemy contrived to run

run it on shore and burn it themselves: such also was the fate of Mons. Conflans' own ship. Two, alas, were sunk in the engagement. On our side very few killed, and no officer of note. Two of our ships are lost by stress of weather, for it was stormy the whole time, but the crews and officers safe. Eight of their ships are run up the river Vilaine, where they will be at least very harmless, if Sir Edward cannot get at them. The other eight got out to sea.

Admiral Saunders has not been able to join Hawke, but writes word that he will keep the seas as long as he has either provisions or water (though he has only his own ship) to pick up stragglers. General Townshend is come safe home. Thurot is on the coast of Scotland, and Boys within twenty leagues of him.

What a series of successes and mercies! I am much pleased to hear that the churches were quite as much crowded yesterday, as I remember them in the terrors of the earthquakes. Nothing could be cheerfuller than my ride this morning in a full sunshine amidst the discharge of the Park, Tower and ship guns, and innumerable rings of bells. I hope your spirits are good enough not to throw any damp on your share of the general joy. Adieu!

Dec. 1st. On comparing my account with the Gazette I find some small errors, but none material.

rial. Some of the French prisoners told Captain Campbell they had two Dunkirk pilots on board each ship—this looks as if they had aimed rather at the English than the Irish coast; but I trust you are now very safe.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *Dec.* 3, 1759.

I CONGRATULATE you, my dear Miss Talbot, on the grammatical improvements you have made from those dialogues of profound erudition which have passed between you and the learned Doctor. Indeed these improvements are of so extraordinary a kind, that the instance you gave me of your perfect knowledge of *an adverb*, was to my illiterate head at first utterly unintelligible; till I discovered that you had invented a new part of speech: and whereas ordinary grammarians content themselves with a noun substantive, and a noun adjective, you have enriched the accidence with a *noun adverb*. I would not willingly defraud the learned Doctor of his share in this honour, and yet

I have a strange persuasion that it belongs entirely to you.

I am much obliged to you for sending me the account of this new occasion for thankfulness; one is glad to hear such news repeated; we on the sea-shore have indeed particular reason to be thankful for an event which in all probability will ensure our safety. God grant that the disappointments and ill successes of our enemies may incline them to an equitable peace: amidst all the joys of victory one must and ought to shudder at the calamities of war. How dreadful is it to think how many families must be undone by the sinking of the two French ships.

By all I could see or hear, the thanksgiving was as well attended to in the country as you say it was in London, nay probably much better, for we country folks do not go to church to pick pockets, as the woman did at St. Paul's. I have heard from Mrs. Montagu, so your conscience may be easy on that subject.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Jan.* 6, 1760.

MANY happy new years to you, dear Miss Carter, I should have sent you my good wishes before but have not been quite well. Do not however be uneasy about me, for a little of the usual discipline has brought me about again very cleverly, as you will feel assured when I tell you I have been this morning spending a very comfortable two hours with Lady Robert *, who is just as kind, and as friendly, and as unengaged here as she was at Bristol. Her house is one of the best I know in London, and she enjoys it quite in the right way—not as a pompous suit of apartments to be lighted up for a joyless drum, but as a number of large comfortable rooms that, well furnished and warmed with good fires, make a cheerful home for a number of friends and relations to meet in every evening. Instead of calling my attention to a fine toilette with very pretty baubles upon it, or

* The Editor does not know who this amiable Lady Robert was, possibly it might be Lady Robert Bertie, whose first husband was Lord Raymond.

to an extremely elegant set of Dresden china in a glass case, she showed me a fine Bible, and a very pretty collection of books which filled the sides—and on the whole I have not this long while seen a room so suited to my taste, or so agreeably inhabited.

Poor Lady Coventry* is going to Bristol, the beginning of next week—I wish she had a Miss Carter to go with her—but if she has not—as alas! where is such a one to found—or how should poor Lady Coventry find her?—I really fear the dullness of the place will do her as much harm, as the waters can do her good. Yet she wants them much, and I am quite grieved for her.

Lady Anson and Lady Grey are very good, they always call once a week, and I only have to complain that their visits are too short; scarce any of our friends come to us of an evening, which during my fit of *ennui* used to vex me, but now I am well, I neither tax them with unkindness, nor the time with tediousness, for as my mornings are engaged by exercise, I am glad enough in the evening of two or three solitary hours to read and write. Indeed I seldom have so much, as we are always ad-

* The celebrated beauty, sister to the Duchess of Argyle, she lingered till the September following.

mitted

mitted into the study between eight and nine; and yet ten days ago, when this wretched animal frame was but a little out of order, how long did that moment seem! I was sadly reduced too for want of books—I supplied that want by reading Epictetus. A thousand thanks to you for the treasure! Though the good old man continually vexed me with his half right notions, and I longed to talk with him and set him quite right on a thousand points. The sweet Ode I read with a higher admiration than ever, and to do it true justice cried over it very heartily, and yet on the whole found my mind relieved and my spirits the better for it.

Mrs. Smythe is so good as to be with us still, but grieves us by talking of going soon. My poor mother will find herself very lonely, unless you revive her with the thoughts of your being in the neighbourhood at least, and as often as you can possibly be her guest (I know these cloistered walls do not suit your gay volatile genius) very early in the spring. Do pray be so good as to let me hope to see you soon, for indeed I want you sadly.

Thank you for all your Bristol news, I chatted it all over with Miss Chetwynd, and we approve Miss Ord and Captain Allen very much. Apropos, Mr. Ward, so far from breaking his heart, has made proposals to another lady, a Miss Ashton of Cheshire, an immense fortune, of eighteen. Whether

she

she may accept or reject him, the other may I think comfort herself that a heart so soon healed is not worth much regret. She spent a day with me lately; looks well, and behaves and talks in a way that makes one love and esteem her. Adieu! I could chat on much longer, but should be too late for the Post; you have every good wish from all here.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Jan.* 12, 1760.

You were very good, my dear Miss Talbot, to assure me you had got quite well again, for that fit of *ennui* had been my terror, and I grieved to think the deluging weather had prevented your rides: are you heroine enough to venture out in this severe frost? In pursuance of a desperate resolution, and indeed a pretty necessary one, taken up this week, that no weather should keep me at home, I ventured on Tuesday to walk five miles to see Mrs. Gambier*, but the ways were in many

* Wife of the late Admiral Gambier (uncle to the present Lord Gambier) who then resided at Betshanger about five miles from Deal.

places

places so rough that one hobbled like a cat in pattens, and the wind so cold that there was some hazard of being petrified upon the road. However I have kept to my resolution, which, considering a strong aversion to walking in frosty weather, I hold to be a very laudable perseverance. In one of my rambles I found a mossy bank shaded by ivy of such remarkable verdure, and so beautifully interwoven, that I was wild for a pair of wings to enable me to transport it to Lambeth for you to copy, perhaps you may think this wish very inconsistent with my cowardice, which once upon a like occasion reduced me to make you an awkward apology, which you most graciously admitted, for my not breaking my neck from St. Vincent's rock; but the experiment of the wings would be much safer at present, as there would not be the least hazard of their melting by the way.

I am very glad you have seen Lady Robert, and was obliged to you for the description of your visit. Her manner of filling and ornamenting her rooms is perfectly agreeable to the turn of her conversation. Poor Lady Coventry was expected at Bristol six weeks ago. It was more sociable and cheerful then, than I fear she will find it now. By what I have heard there seems but little hopes of her recovery. The Bristol waters are no doubt excellent to prevent consumptions, but how many instances

alas!

alas! did we see that they do not cure one. Almost every body is desirous to defer going there too long. God be thanked this was prevented in one case. Have you seen Mrs. Montagu lately? Poor soul she has been under a most grievous restraint some time from an inflammation in her eye, which has not suffered her to look into a book. I really do think and talk about coming to London for a short time the middle of next month; but it depends on circumstances—

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Jan.* 31, 1760.

What a kind journey, my dear Miss Carter, was you upon the point of taking this twelvemonth? Thankful I have cause to be to this minute that you *did* take it; but make a more comfortable one now, and I will take it as kindly and be twice as glad to see you. Both my mother and I want you sadly, *her* house is lonely, my books not in so good order as they were, and an hundred things

things we have to chat over with you. You had much trouble with me when I was sick, and froward, come and have a little comfort of me now I am well and in good humour.

I commend you for resuming your long walks, because I am sure they will do you good. I cannot boast of my rides lately, my horse has got the epidemical cold. The London horses have all been absolutely laid up with it. We were almost wishing, for experiment sake only, that the chairmen too had had a universal cold for one week only, to see whether that week's distress would have reduced the fine world to have made use of their two legs, or reconciled them to solitude and a little thought. I think I enjoy as much retirement here as I used to do at sweet Cuddesden, save that I am not indulged in rising so early, and therefore lose its best hours in sleep. I find employments of different kinds, to fill up most agreeably every hour of the day, and really enjoy my solitude.

For want of other nonsense books, I am reading an Italian translation of Euripides.—A pretty good one I fancy, though, what in Italian is peculiarly provoking, rugged, and inharmonious. The Phenicians, and the Medea, filled me with horror, nor can I conceive how a wretched people who believed all those shocking fables to be true, and that their lives were to be happy or miserable according to

the

the wild and revengeful caprice of such profligate demons as they worshipped, and to end in obscure darkness—how they could outlive one such representation. And these were the wise, the polite Athenians? The Orestes amused me very well, for its turn is rather comic; and I am now breaking my heart over the Hecuba. But indeed I want you much to come and prog for me. I cannot induce you by any hopes of meeting Mr. Forster here, for though he comes to-morrow he chuses like you to be in London. Shall I send and take lodgings for you in the same house as your spouse? Apropos of spouses, Mr. Benson and Miss Oliver are happily married, they are to be in London a few days, one of which they kindly devote to Lambeth. Mr. Ford is just gone half way to Bristol with the Duchess of Beaufort, whose eldest unmarried daughter has a most terrible cough. They will be useful company for Lady Coventry, if poor soul she is not past it. I hear poor Patty Richardson is going at last, she ought to have gone last year; pray rejoice my mother, puss, and Nancy, and me, by sending word in your next, that you are just setting out. Can I do any thing for you?

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Feb.* 14, 1760.

A mere billet this, dear Miss Carter, to wish you a good journey. *The old coach*, I presume, carries you to Canterbury, so that if you are as I hope got safely there, the rest is mere amusement. Do not form too high an idea and expectation of my looks, that you may not be disappointed; however if neither illness nor sorrow overtakes me between this and Tuesday, I can promise you they will both be healthy and glad ones. Last year they were neither, though then they were better than you expected. When I saw you first, yesterday was a twelvemonth—little did I think what a half year we were likely to pass together; a half year that no gratitude and affection can repay.—My mother bids me say that if you land here on Monday you will find your bed well aired, and I add by way of inducement, that I am informed last night's storm sounded twice as nobly in that room as in any other. The solemn music would be lost amid the rattle of coaches. Well, determine that matter as you see most convenient, only let us see you as soon,

soon, and often as you can. With every possible good wish, adieu! *jasqu'au revoir.*

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *April* 17, 1760.

I HAVE much to say to you, because I said nothing to you on Tuesday. When I saw you bent on making your escape, I thought it would be cruel to keep you for another painful half hour—and as you was, upon the whole, I believe, very determined to go into the country, I denied myself the telling you how very sorry and grieved I was to part with you. Perhaps I did wrong, and you may have an ill opinion enough of me to ascribe to an ungrateful indifference, what proceeded from a very different cause—but think it at your peril, for I have learnt from the heroines in Parthenissa that these sorts of offences are never to be forgiven. Oh dear, what a precious treasure of false thoughts, and refinements, and hyperboles have you brought me in that volume. It does me a vast deal of good, for its pompous absurdities make me laugh more

than any book of intended humour could do. How could you leave the office of French purveyor general to my highness so easily, nay so wilfully! And now do not you think the next bringer of trash will be equally welcome as yourself? You *did* think so for a minute that afternoon, but I forgive you for this once, if you promise me never to be so absurd again—Oh dear, now here comes Billy and his French——Well 'tis dispatched, and I have a few moments more for you—You had a sweet day yesterday, and I hope got to Canterbury not too weary, and are happily at home to day, in tolerably cheerful spirits, and finding every body better than you expected, and you as welcome to your sister, as this day's seasonable rain is to our poor blossoms here. We are as quiet here during the trial *—as unvisited I mean—as on a Welch mountain. But the trial is over and the poor wretch condemned I hear—and the sentence to be pronounced to-morrow. All well here thank God—I will write again soon, and pray let me hear from you *very* soon. My mother is more your's than she allows me time to tell you. With a thousand grateful thanks ever your's.

* Of Earl Ferrers in Westminster Hall, for the murder of Mr. Johnson his steward.

Mrs.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *April* 19, 1760.

You were extremely good, my dear Miss Talbot, in giving me the pleasure of receiving a Letter from you a few hours after I got home, and I very sincerely thank you for it. I was just sitting down to write to you on Tuesday night, when Mrs. Montagu's coach came to fetch me to spend the evening with her, and at my return it was too late, and I was too much worn out with being in company all day to do any thing but go to my bed.

I do heartily ask not *your* pardon but my own, if I was so absurd as to think any collector of nonsense, of so much consequence to you as myself. I should be as very a tigress as any of your heroines, and pull out the eyes of any body, who should pretend to execute this office for you with half so much pleasure as I do, and this is a sufficient proof that I think nobody can execute it half so well.

I got very well to Canterbury except the small inconvenience of being choaked with dust, and for the latter part of my journey stunned with noise, which I plainly foresaw must be the consequence of taking

taking up three men whom I knew to be likewise lawyers and wits. It was impossible but that merely as men they would talk all together: and as lawyers and wits they must talk so much the faster and louder. Indeed they were sufficiently vociferous: but to do them justice there was something so sensible, and clever, and comical in what they said, that they would have been very agreeable company to any thing but a stupid aching head, which would have been better pleased with the solitude of your Welch mountain, than with the most witty and ingenious conversation that was ever uttered. I set out the next morning from Canterbury for Deal, and just as I was beginning to grow tired, I met Harry in the road; the unexpected sight of him proved like the good effects of sal volatile, and enabled me to get very comfortably on to Mrs. Gambier's, from whence I had a very moderate walk to Deal yesterday.

My best respects and thanks wait on the Archbishop and Mrs. Talbot. Be so good as to tell his Grace that I hear a bookseller at Maidstone is going to publish a new edition of Philpot's History of Kent, with some additions that have been found amongst his papers. I hope the shower which so revived your blossoms at Lambeth, has provided Mrs. Talbot with full scope for exercising her genius on the flower stands. I know she will be so

kind

kind as often to wish me a nosegay: not that I want one just now, as I amply supplied myself with primroses and violets through most part of my walk, besides the pillage of Mrs. Gambier's garden. But whether I have the nosegay or not I insist upon the wish.

I rejoice at your promise of writing again soon, don't write a long Letter if it fatigues you, just a few lines to say you are well. Adieu! may every happiness attend you.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *April* 26, 1760.

You bid me write a short Letter, sore against my will I believe I must, for time is not. I have wanted for some days to write to you, to give you the comfort of knowing (for I know it is a comfort to you, though I cannot imagine why it should be,) that my health God be thanked is getting as stout as you could wish, and that good Mr. Ford does not think there will be any occasion for a second trip to Bristol. I sleep well, have

have a good appetite for plain mutton, and have enjoyed the sweet spring weather to the utmost, in riding, walking, and lounging in a coach, and am grown as fond as one ought to be of many green lanes in the environs, and many gay spots in the garden which has been dressed in its gayest colors, and all the beauty of blossoms. We drank tea in the gallery and looked as summer like as could be.

I was agreeably surprized by a visit from Lady Anson, with as easy and friendly a countenance and manner as if the awkward winter had been annihilated, so that I hope we shall get into the perfectly right track again soon. She came to ask if I was ready to set out with her for Bath the end of this week, for one fortnight; I could almost have found in my heart to say yes. I am sure nothing has been the matter, nor any other blame but that cruel influenza, the enchanted circle of dissipation and amusement.

Have you heard how much we are all obliged (under Providence) to the Duke of Ancaster's care and presence of mind? The first day of the trial, some scaffolding at the end of Westminster Hall was actually on fire, and his care prevented the least alarm being given—had the word fire been but whispered, one can scarce foresee what fatal consequences might have followed from the universal panic that would have spread through such a crowd.

All persons now recollect that they wondered to hear a saw going at that time—but it did go very usefully to saw off the burning wood.

I am just come from three very pleasant visits, of which I will give you an account. First we went to the Admiralty, and found Lady Anson, who does not go to Bath, and whom therefore I would fain have tempted to come and stay at Lambeth. At our next visit we battled stoutly for the *cotterie* of *Beaux esprits*, and I was somewhat diverted with the absurdity of prejudice, though heartily grieved to see its force in a mind sincerely amiable, if it were not (from the infection of its own *cotterie*) so critically wise. When *wit* implies free-thinking, pedantry, ill-nature, pertness, unjustifiable singularity, caprice, I will dread it as much as the sagest of them; but when guarded with prudence, religion, humanity, softness, good humour, and candour,—May my sociable hours be spent amongst the witty and not the wise. The third visit was to Lady Hyde, where we met somewhat very angelic that enquired very kindly after you, and owned fairly that she ought to have called on you, but actually should have done it if she had not thought by being near you it was so always in her power, that she let herself be hindered so one time after another, till alas it was too late. I will not tell you who it was, that you may see if you can

guess

guess from my description. Join to elegance and *leggiadrezza* of form a countenance mixed up of modesty, sense, sweetness, spirit, innocence, and sincerity, and a manner equally lively and engaging. And now tell me who it was that I had the good luck to meet, and whom if I was the valiant Artabanes, or the generous Artarasdes, I should most certainly convey in my flying flaming chariot to some superb and magnificent enchanted castle.

We are deep in and amused with Ophelia, and —you positively will not let me write any more. Adieu then, you cross *bel esprit*.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 1, 1760.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Miss Talbot, for giving me so good an account of your health. V. S. dice che non possa immaginarsi perchè la sua sanità mi sia una consolazione! ed io altresi, non posso immaginarmi come lei sarebbe mai entrato in pensiero, da dire una cosa cosi stravagante.—Your airings at present I fear must be confined to the coach, and all your gay views of

spring clouded by this sullen north-east wind, which like the spirit of melancholy,

"Shades every flower and darkens every green."

but the zephyrs I hope will soon return, and restore your cheerful prospects and fragrant air.

I honour your courage extremely in battling so stoutly for the *cotterie* of *beaux esprits*, though it was an engagement in which the best champion could have very little prospect of gaining a victory. It is certainly a most ingenious and successful method of abusing those whom one does not chuse to like, to call them by names, which, as they have never been defined, nobody understands, and therefore nobody can confute. If it was to be affirmed, that the whole *cotterie* had a horn of a foot long growing out of the side of their noses, the report could do them but very little mischief, as perhaps not above one in ten who looked in their faces could be brought to believe it; but let them be called *beaux esprits* and *wits*, and every purpose of folly, ill-nature, or prejudice is fully gratified, and their characters are very successfully set up as objects of universal terror or contempt and ridicule, though nobody can tell why or wherefore.

I am not very ready at finding out likenesses, but your picture I think a good deal resembles

Mrs. Spencer. If it was meant for her, she has had the good luck to meet with an excellent painter, and indeed she is a very enchanting object. I wish I had any visiting histories to amuse you with in return, but, alas, I am doomed this afternoon to stick myself out, and pay my compliments to a new inhabitant of this place, who, I am informed, makes curtesies *qui ne finissent point*, and at least as many in number as good Mrs. Richardson. What a lamentable change will this be from my dear, laughing, easy, good-humoured ————, with whom I have passed so many happy hours in that house where I must now go and look formal. Well, I must accommodate myself to the change as well as I can, but the loss of an agreeable family out of such a place as this must be sensibly perceived; these may be equally agreeable when we know them, but then that is a work of time. After our visit my sister and I are going to a concert, and from the concert to a supper. The best thing I can do is to go and compose an oration for the use of the company, setting forth the advantage of keeping good hours.

Well, I got through all my fatigues yesterday, and to-day my head pays the forfeit. I must to bed again, so good night at noon.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 8, 1760.

Many days of health and spirits have been my lot, dear Miss Carter, since last I writ to you. Last year at this time how kindly was you partaking and relieving my days of languor and distress! By the help of my little memorandum-book and my Lord's Letters, I recal almost every one of those days, else I should not know how to be so particularly thankful as I ought—yet even those days as they passed were more than tolerable, were sweetened by a thousand mercies, had their supports, their comforts, their pleasures; and much of this I owe to you.

Let me see what has passed since I wrote last. Poor Lord Ferrers died as hardened as he lived; the thought is too shocking to dwell upon. I rejoice I can give you a better account of one who at Bristol we feared was to be looked on as in the same kind of light. Captain Clerke, after three or four months of lingering illness and sincere penitence, has left his sweet wife, I hope, to a happier remaining life than there could have been a prospect of if *his* had continued, or than *she* could have

have enjoyed had his closing scene been less hopeful.

Many walks, rides, drives, and a kind morning visit from Lady Robert; correspondence of Notes only with Mrs. Montagu, the last I sent her was a huff; Mr. Okey gone to his apprenticeship, and I a little *unkit* for want of my scholar; I hope he will make an honest thriving man; many jobs dispatched—much painting—a pacquet of very pretty drawings from Fanny Tracy, one enclosed for you, which I will send when I can—a morning spent with Lady Egremont—another with Lady Anson and Lady Grey. This, I think, is the sum of my labours since I wrote last, except the wearing out of your green hat, which was getting yellow—another shall be forthcoming when you come for it. To-day I have been reading with due wrath and abomination "Le Philosophe Sans Souci." Some lines in that wickedest of all books are so evidently taken from the wrong reasonings of the ungodly in the Wisdom of Solomon, chap. 2, that I confess to me they are perfectly harmless, but I tremble to think what mischief they will do in the fine world. In other parts of the book there seem to be really pretty things—but how is it possible a man can be such an ideot? How unaccountable is it that pride (for if the man is, as he says, a moral man, though that is *fort sujet à caution*,

*tion**, *pride* must be his only motive for disbelief,) should make a wretch so very mean and grovelling as to triumph in the thought of annihilation, rather than acknowledge any being in the universe superior to himself! But there would be more use in writing these things to *him* than to you, so I will have done.

I am a bad painter, and you a good guesser, for many amiable features in that I sent you were like Mrs. Spencer, though the sketch was intended for Lady Howe. I do not wish you many such gay days as you describe in your last, if each is to cost you a head-ache, but I am glad you have some of them, as they make a useful variety. Oh dear, I have travelled through Parthenissa, lured by the curiosity of seeing how the strange writer could possibly wind up his strange stories, and not one of them finished.

* If Voltaire is to be believed, that is a point which is by no means doubtful; but the Philosopher of Sans Souci and the Poet of Ferney were well matched, and the greatest obligation which the world has to them both is their quarrelling with each other.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 19, 1750.

I hope you have enjoyed this fine weather with all the spirit of increasing health. A Letter this moment received from Mrs. Montagu has given me the happiness of hearing you look admirably well, but I am more pleased with your own account. I have had many a secret sigh from reflecting, that though your recovery, God be thanked, secured to your friends the blessing of your being out of danger, you felt no higher enjoyment from it yourself but merely a languid perception of the absence of pain. But your last Letter gives me hopes that you begin to enjoy the vivid sunshine of actual health, a very different state from the dead calm of not being sick.

It is not, to be sure, but that I should be very glad you did my green hat the honour of wearing it fairly and peaceably out, but to think of the poor thing's being twisted and distorted into a triangle, or a pentagon, or an octagon, and, in short, into every regular and irregular figure and no figure, as every miserable hat has been twisted and distorted that

that ever had the ill luck to light upon your head, is past bearing.

I suppose you have heard that *le Philosophe Sans Souci* has thought proper to disown that horrid book, and order it to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman. Surely that ought to be its fate in every country that calls itself Christian. Have you seen the new Dialogues? and how do you like them? They did not reach me till last night, and were immediately snatched away, and I imagine it will be some days before I shall get peaceable possession of them. I am very glad to hear of the amendment of Mrs. Clerke's prospects, and of the satisfaction she must feel from the manner in which the Captain concluded his life. Those cases are shocking indeed, where to every other guilt is added the dreadful aggravation of hardened impenitence.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth; *June* 3, 1760.

You will want to hear of us at this time very particularly, my dear Miss Carter, and with thankful-

thankfulness I can tell you we are all well. In the midst of a dreadful sickly season this air seems wholesome, and one can keep tolerably cool here by sitting still.

I cannot describe to you the situation of my mind*, and will not, I think, attempt it—yet I will too, that I may understand it myself. From many sharp lessons, and many long ones in the school of affliction, it is composed, and till this morning I had scarcely shed a tear. From long seclusion, by one means or other, out of the once familiar circle, I feel as if it would be impertinence in me to think the stroke nearly touched myself—yet has it cut off a tried, a faithful, an invaluable friend, whom I know I should always have found such, though from circumstances of situation, and I know not what, no longer the enlivener, the joy, the sunshine of my sociable hours. I have long lived in a separate state, so that scarce any changes in the world can touch me personally—but then for how many do I feel a loss which to them nothing can repair! An understanding the most superior, the most comprehensive, directed by a goodness of heart the most sincere and indefatigable, enlivened by spirits the most amiably gay and active, adorned by every accomplishment, every day of their lives

* On account of the death of Lady Anson.

must

must make each feel their own and the general loss more heavily. They seem to bear it as they ought, with deep distress, but composed; but, alas, in such a case as this, time can bring no alleviation! My earnest wish is to be capable of doing them some good, but, alas, I shrink into such a nothing, that I am almost tempted to beg they will forgive me for being still alive. I who last year was so near the grave, to have survived such a one! The Archbishop has been with them daily; my mother too has been at Lady Grey's, whose sorrow is, as her affection was, beyond bounds or expression. I have not been allowed to go into the distressed scene yet. This awful stroke was very sudden, a confinement indeed of ten days, but no fears till Saturday, and even Saturday night very few. A scarlet fever as I apprehend, though they called it a rash. I will not go on with the particulars of the family distress, where every line will give you pain. I long to be amongst them, and hope I shall to-morrow.—Interrupted, so adieu!

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *June 5*, 1760.

I CANNOT forbear saying a word or two to you, dear Miss Talbot, though, alas, I fear it can do you but little good. But the constant anxiety I feel for what you must suffer, and the dread of the consequences it may have on your only half-established health, must plead my excuse. A sad experience of the miserable and lasting effects of an attention to scenes such as you are now engaged in on my own health and spirits, makes me tremble for your's. At present indeed your mind must be so fixed to the one object which so sadly engages those with whom you converse, that it is hardly possible for you to use any method of relieving your own grief. But your friends will in all probability soon go out of town, and then give me leave most earnestly to entreat you, for a little while at least, to go from Lambeth. You mentioned when I was in town a scheme which Mrs. Talbot and you had formed of passing some days at one or two places in the country. Do not, I beseech you, suffer any unreal difficulties, nor even real ones, unless they are very important, to prevent this scheme.

Change

Change of place is one of the best mechanical aids to the spirits, and much aid is often necessary to these, even when the mind is furnished, as your's is, with every higher consolation. You say you are composed, and I dare say you are; but the force of duty, which restrains all the extravagancies of grief, and keeps it within the bounds of perfect resignation, can no more, without a miracle, prevent its painful feelings and their fatal effects, than it can cool the veins in a fever, or supply new breath to an asthma. I know that in circumstances like your's there is an indolence that renders one averse to every change, however short or trifling, and raises objections against every proposal; but do pray exert all your power against it, and determine to think of some little journey, as a thing necessary and proper to be done. Adieu! I am inexpressibly anxious about you. May the tenderest care of Divine Providence supply every good, which my fruitless solicitude can only wish you!

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 6, 1760.

Be not, my dear Miss Carter, so much more anxious about me than there is any reason you should. You must not judge by your own quick and tender feelings of a mind that is, I fear, very faulty in the contrary extreme. This was (and I had rather sink myself in your esteem in a point where your ease is concerned) my natural turn when I was a little girl, unseasoned with any principles at all. I afterwards grew up to feel and to suffer in some near and very trying instances a great deal; but in general I rather upon principle tie my thoughts down to make myself feel as much as I ought, than find any need of dissipating or relieving them. However, do not suspect me of doing this too much, for I am in every way very careful of myself. Consider that in the present case my two dearest friends are sincerely *concerned*. They are not in *affliction*, so that whatever melancholy scenes I am conversant with elsewhere, I have always, God be thanked, a cheerful home to return to. When I go to my distressed friends abroad, I have

have the comfort of carrying them some little relief, to sweet Lady Margaret especially, whose disposition is so mild and affectionate that there cannot be a more pleasing nor an easier task than to do her good. Lady Bell too is excessively fond of me, and a very good child. She is not well just now, and we all play with her at *geographical goose*, and *watch it and catch it*, and such idle things, which, done with such a view, are a rational amusement. This morning my Lord saw me by his own desire; we were both much affected. Poor man! he had been with the King, who received him very graciously, but at this time they were very unfit company for one another. I cannot, my dear friend, witness these scenes unaffected, but I am not affected painfully, for I cannot help looking beyond them, and seeing within a very few years all these good people restored to a much happier union than that which this awful stroke has interrupted. You know the only object of unmingled pain to me is any turn of mind inconsistent with such a hope, and *there* I have a sensibility of which your boundless candour must have very imperfect ideas.

You want me to move from hence. If it happens to be right so to do we probably shall, but this place is really cheerful. *Here*, when the weather and dust permit, I can ride, which I could not else-

elsewhere, and we are going to have much company. Dr. and Mrs. Potter come to us to-night, the Berkeley's next week, Mr. and Mrs. Secker, and many others. My mother has just borrowed a harpsichord, Mr. Mence brings his voice, and a little organist, and we are to have small musical parties. I wish you could have heard him the other morning sing, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Mrs. Montagu was here yesterday, we see much of Dr. Monsey, the gallery looks very cheerful, the garden is gay with a profusion of flowers, and altogether you see we do very well, so pray do not be uneasy about us. I have time to say no more, except that I am most sincerely obliged to you, and with the truest affection my tranquillity is capable of, &c.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 28, 1760.

You have a right to know, dear Miss Carter, when my time passes agreeably, and this has been more the case lately than you can imagine.

gine. Not that it has not had its mixture of bitter, of low, of hurried, or of languid hours; but it has, on the whole, been such as you could wish it. The desire of giving such little assistance and relief as could be given to my friends in distress has made me exert myself, and really could you see them, their conduct would add to the love and esteem you feel for them, so nobly do they bear up under their great loss: I have seen them all but the solicitor; but of Lady Grey I have seen least, for she has been much at Richmond; the impression of quiet sorrow on her countenance is affectingly deep, which makes me long the more to talk to her, because I am sure it would be a great relief to her mind, of which she stands more in need than she is aware.

I have lately seen a good deal of Mrs. Montagu, and yesterday passed the afternoon in her pretty room; Mrs. Pitt and Dr. Monsey were our party, the former looking better than ever I saw her, and teizing us with the height of *humour* and *good humour* for the difficulty we had among us raised (myself the chief engineer) about a morning visit to Mrs. Donnelans. I wish it was laziness that prevented Mrs. Montagu from writing to you, but stooping hurts her; she lives too much in hot rooms, and in too constant an exertion of her fine spirits.

I wish

I wish you joy of the unexpected good news from Quebec, the rejoicings last night, which were great and noisy, struck me at first as quite unsuitable, now the one was gone which felt of all others the highest joy from every public event.—But how far is she above such petty joys!

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 30, 1760.

I WRITE to you, dear Miss Talbot, to the sound of a fiddle: not that I am dancing, but within the sound of people who are. All the world is gone to the assembly, and I am at least as well amused at home in bed with the head-ache, regaling myself with balm and lavender, and regaling myself still more with the thoughts of how much happier I am with the head-ache while my friends are at the assembly, than I should be if I was at the assembly, and they at home in bed. A quieting sleep, and this consideration, have given me such good spirits as enable me to thank you for your Letter received last night. I rejoice to find some of your hours have been spent so cheerfully;

usefully I know they always are. It is very happy for your friends that you have been able to see them so often. One is always happy to hear of such right principles and proper behaviour, as those you mention of your distressed friends. It is greatly to be hoped that you may find an opportunity of doing all the good you hope to poor Lady Grey. So deep an impression of sorrow on a calm temper, requires a very particular attention to prevent its consequences.

I am glad you see Mrs. Montagu pretty often, she will enliven your spirits; and I heartily wish that, as much as is good for her, your lecture may restrain her's. She does indeed exert them too much, and often hurts herself from mere complaisance to other people. It is just dark, and I must return to my pillow.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 26, 1760.

Indeed, dear Miss Carter, I ought to have writ to you before, but truly I have not had time. My Lord is confined with a pretty little fit of

of the gout, which promises not to be of long duration. Lady Grey is at Sunning Hill, as melancholy as ever. Mrs. Montagu is soon going to Tunbridge, which I am glad of, as it always does her good, and she promises to be very quiet. It would do her twice as much good could you contrive to meet her there, for no one knows your value, or loves you more than she does. Lord Lyttelton's book is much admired by the best judges in France.

How goes on your correspondence with Charlotte? I have two Letters in my pocket from Lady Grey and Lady Bell that I wish I could shew you, because I know they would please you. I had to-day a very painful, though a very gratifying message from Lord Anson with a mourning ring.

Oh, let me tell you we are all ready to quarrel for your pretty silver sounding hand-bell. It has been so useful to his Grace in his gout, that I have sent to get two more, but they sound so unmusical that my mother has changed her's for a whistle, and that I have got for myself rather tolls than tinkles. You see how very much we need you. How does your head-ache do? But while you are so happy with the head-ache, would not pity be thrown away upon you? You can have no

idea,

idea, it would make you wild if you had, what a profusion of roses we have had here.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *July* 29, 1760.

Yes, to be sure, you should have writ to me long ago, but as I had the happiness of hearing, from other people, that you was well, I forbore to puzzle you with my enquiries, which might interrupt you if you was busy, and teize you if you had a mind to be idle. I rejoice the archbishop's gout has been so kindly. I did not go to the races, so did not see Mr. Forster: though I really believe I had a mind to go; but when the time came, either some real objection, or such as indolence conjured up in that form, kept me at home. I am afraid that the ranging and packing up caps and ruffles was one principal difficulty, and that I might have got over several others, if it had been lawful to go into the assembly-room with my hat. At least I did not find that my indolence opposed my walking a pretty many miles that

that week, in order to spend a day with two or three other friends, at a place where there is a more absolute sea prospect than even here. The first appearance of it, which is from a great height, has something very striking and formidable in a coach, to people who have never seen it before; for it seems as if at the next step one should fall perpendicularly into the sea, however there is a very safe foot-path to the bottom, where one sees hardly any thing but sea and sky, as every other view is shut out by the cliffs which bound the shore, and which seem to answer to those on the opposite coast of France, as the rocks do at Bristol. Perhaps the sea in the one place and the river in the other, forced a passage through the continent at that time, when *the fountains of the great deep were broken up*. One of the pretty circumstances of the place, I have mentioned, is a spring which rises among the pebbles on the shore. It is constantly overflowed and covered by the tide, but when that retreats it does not retain the least mixture of salt, but on the contrary, is the pleasantest water I ever tasted, even preferable to that of St. Vincent's Rock, though I should not dare to say so, if I was not at a competent distance from you *.

You

* This spring is in St. Margaret's Bay, under the South Foreland. It is a curious and beautiful sight to see the cows which feed

You were very good to give me an instance of my importance in the article of the hand-bell, for I never was more perfectly disposed to think myself a mere αχθος αρουρης † than I am at present. If my sisters should take it into their heads to make up nosegays for themselves, I should be undone, as it seems to be almost the only earthly thing in which I am of any consequence. My head is much as usual. I congratulate you on your roses at Lambeth, but if I had nothing to wish for at Lambeth but roses I have enough of them here.

I rejoice Mrs. Montagu is going to Tunbridge. I have not heard from her time immemorial. If Tunbridge was within the compass of any moderate walk for a two-legged creature, I would certainly contrive to see her there; but as it is not, I must content myself with forming hearty good wishes for her at a distance. I am puzzled about a line in Homer that will not let me sleep in my bed. I know you will have no compassion for any such dif-

feed on the top of the cliff, regularly at low water come down their winding path to drink at this stream as it flows among the pebbles, where every impression of their feet makes a little clear pool.

† From Homer,—"burden of the earth."

ficulty,

ficulty, but I hope his Grace will be more charitable, so I will enclose it for his inspection.

——————— αὐλαρ ἐγωγε
Λισσομ' Ἀχιλληι μεθεμεν χολον ——.
Il. A. v. 281 *.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 15, 1760.

I do very well I thank you, and the weather is surely fine though rather autumnal. To-day I spent two hours and a half riding through most delightful lanes to Richmond, to take leave of Lady Grey for the summer; she goes to Wrest next week. She looks sweet and dejected. Her two charming girls improve every day; there is now something as *amiable* in Lady Bell, as there was *extraordinary* when she was a baby. On Thursday we all dined at the Bishop of Rochester's at Bromley, where we met Dr. and Mrs. Potter, and to my

* For the controversy which this grammatical difficulty occasioned, see Memoirs of Mrs. Carter, p. 445, &c. 4to. edit.

great

great satisfaction Lord Corke. Should you have known me if you had met me at a public day, ten miles off, in a full-moon cap, diamond ear-rings, a gaudy negligée, and no sort of hood or hat?

On Tuesday I rode to Wimbleton (in due time I shall get as far as Mrs. Duranda's at Putney), we visited Mrs. Poyntz, admired the very charming park, walked to the menagerie, and all over the ground floor of the house, saw many curious and pretty birds, some very good pictures, and Mrs. Spencer's closet, which I fancy you have heard her describe. It is not near finished, though small, is very elegant and pretty, and will be immensely costly. And yet a plain green paper, white curtains, two or three Dutch chairs, and a deal table, would be quite as elegant and commodious as all that ornament, and more suitable to the size; and as my mother well observed to me, much more suitable for a grave good woman to say her prayers in, than amidst all those Cupids, and Hymens and Metamorphoses. The *Allegro* is a pretty dancing youth, and pleased me much. The *Penseroso*, a jolly buxom widow in becoming weeds, with a little proper sorrow called into a very plump handsome face.

Such is the use we make of your unsummerlike weather; I think you will be pleased and commend

us,

us. How very different from the melancholy scene you was so kindly sharing with us this time last year! How can I ever be thankful enough to you?

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *Sept.* 1, 1760.

YES, indeed, I am extremely pleased, and do very highly commend your use of what appeared to me very unsummerlike weather. Nay, for that matter, unsummerlike weather it was: for I have taken many a long walk, without being cheered by a single ray of sunshine. I should not have regretted a cloudy sky however, nor a longer walk beneath it, if at the end of it I could have met you in the situation you describe. O, you have found the diamond ear-rings, about which we had so much altercation at Bristol. At your peril produce the pendants against I come to town, or you may find it a difficult matter to convince me you have not stolen them, and sent them to our *friends* in *Georgia*.

I most

I most entirely agree with Mrs. Talbot about the furniture of an *oratory*. That which you describe is trifling and absurd to the highest degree, and one is the more vexed at it as the owner is, in so many respects, entitled to very high esteem. I believe I have expressed myself rather violently: but I have a strange savage taste, and a most unconquerable aversion to finery, though in so gay and glittering an age it may not be always prudent or polite to declare it. Persons of large fortunes may, I suppose, very allowably employ some part of it on things by no means strictly useful, yet it is a pity they should lavish it upon toys of which they must so soon grow weary. Whimsical ornaments are the amusements merely of the day, and are very different in their effects from such objects as have a beauty formed on some fixed standard in nature. People seldom wish to change or grow out of humour with a fine plantation, or a well-proportioned piece of architecture, but every body is presently sick of fantastical painting and gilding. O dear, how did I get myself into such a dissertation.

I have lately had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Honeywood*, though not quite so healthy as might

* The lady to whom Mrs. Carter addressed the lines which begin "O'er these soft lines," &c. 4to. edit. p. 420.

be

be wished. Her looks were much mended by a fortnight's stay at Deal; and probably would have been more so, if our stormy shore would have suffered her to bathe oftener in the sea, or she could have stayed longer. Miss Mulso, Miss Prescot, and Miss Hall, spent a delightful day with me last week, for it had nothing of the hurry that attends a party.

I lately received an account of the subscription to the French prisoners, for which I believe I am to thank you; the preface extremely pleased me. Surely such a behaviour to those whom we have been enabled to conquer, does us a greater honour than allour conquests, and, it is to be hoped, may be one means of our being favoured with a continuance of our great success.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 17, 1760.

I see, dear Miss Carter, I have been a long while without writing to you, so what have I to do but amend; to sit down and be sorry would be worth nothing. I am sure in this time I have thought

thought of you every day, recollected the little incidents of our journey, with a thousand instances of your kind care and attention, and heartily wished you more happy and cheerful hours than you passed then. Our's here trot on very peaceably—*trot* I say*, for they do not *gallop*, as they used to do in one's younger days, nor *glide* as they used to do in sweet Oxfordshire; nor, on the other hand, do they walk heavily on, with sometimes a start, and sometimes a stumble, as they do for so many months; but they keep on a good sober healthy *dog-trot*, neither sad nor joyous—which last however is very wrong, for were I to feel with half the liveliness I ought every reason I have for thankfulness, my hours would be all joy. I cannot really account for the flatness of my spirits, and fancy it must, some how or other, be my own fault, for I am, I thank God, very well. My Lord and my mother are as well as even I can wish them, the season too is delighful, therefore, I again repeat, it must be my fault.

Lady Robert is at last gone out of town: as much as we admired her at Bristol, she has, I assure you, improved upon me ever since. I see by the papers your friend Miss Hall is married, and from the character I have heard of Mr. Nairn, I

* Probably alluding to Rosalind's humourous description of the different paces of time in "As you like it."

am

am very glad of it. For want of you to prog silly books for me, I have picked up a very strange one, but which, with some faults that would make it dangerous to some sort of people, and some excellencies in it that would make it excessively despised by others, has a great deal of merit. It is written by the author of Robinson Crusoe, and called "The Family Instructor," and is so engaging, that when I had once taken it up I knew not how to lay it down again, and have recommended it to my mother as an amusing book, that with all her nicety of taste will not set her to sleep.

You are not obliged to me for the account of the national charity, but we are both obliged to I know not who, that sent one copy for you and another for me. Your's I can account for, since I am told they sent one to every university, and supposing a university of ladies, where could they find a fitter representative, but how poor I should come by one I am quite at a loss. I know not what to say about pendants: when you come to town I will treat your eyes with two of the prettiest caps, bought of the prettiest little milliner, who works to support a sick mother; I was much inclined to have bought all she had, but my mother interposed. And yet sometimes I am tempted to regret my easy wrapping gown and bonnet.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Nov.* 3, 1760.

I OUGHT to have sent you this heathen Greek a fornight ago, *but it had got into my considering drawer*, so you are in luck it ever got out. The world was *so* quiet, such a dearth of intelligence, and my own spirits so flat, that I had not a word to throw at a dog. And as for the Greek, I thought a year sooner or later did not signify. Thus matters went on, or rather stood still, till the fatal 25th*, I was then awakened to a very sincere sense of sorrow, (so that I find when occasions call upon me, I am not that very stupid piece of petrifaction that I have sometimes been willing to fancy); so awful a stroke of Providence, just in so important a crisis, so gracious a parent taken suddenly from a people, who had all, for some years, unitedly considered and behaved to him in that view. It looked like the long suspended stroke of justice, inflicted because mercy had been abused by a profligate age. A thousand other affecting

* Oct. 25th,—on which day King George the Second died.

considerations

considerations rose in one's mind. I am told, that for some years past he was grown very serious, and had many retired moments well employed.—God be thanked! But how shall I express to you my joy, on finding the excellence of that character, on which a nation's hopes (under the blessing of a still gracious Providence) depend, appearing in every instance, great and small, equal to all that my imagination had ever formed of it; nay, even superior. Not only a steadiness of judgment, a wisdom and prudence that is seldom the lot of such early years, a mildness and benignity, an openness and sincerity that make it equally respected and beloved; but what seems almost astonishing on so sudden a transition from the most retired life to the most important and most public post, a readiness, a presence of mind, a grace and address, a propriety of ease and dignity that every body is charmed with. And all is, as at present, peace, union, harmony, every where —all united for the public good.

You will really think me mad, and how I come to be so excessively affected with all this, I know not, but I think myself much in the right for being so too; and as you often see the odd map of my mind, I was willing you should see it now when it is full of gay colouring. I would have given an ear to have been at chapel yesterday, to see the graceful figure, the unaffected seriousness, and awful at-

tention so exemplary; not a word spoke, scarce a look wandering, answering regularly in all the responses and psalms.—Then in the amazingly crowded drawing room something to say to every body, in so graceful, so proper a manner!—and here live poor I in a cloyster, and can only dream over at night the busy scenes I have heard of in the day.—

> "Of feasts, and courts, and pageantry
> Such sights as [*I forget the epithet*] poets * dream,
> On summer eve, near haunted stream."

Did you ever remember me in such a sort of humour as this? I cannot help it, I have been fast asleep these two years, and am now thoroughly awake—that is all I believe. If my head be but right (which probably may be the doubt with you) you may see I am mighty well, and so I thank God we are all. Now all your friends are coming to town, you will not, I hope, think of staying on in the country: if you do, I shall scold —

Looking over some of your Letters in the beginning of the summer, I am ashamed to see by your answers that I could be out of sorts at coming to such a place as Lambeth; it must certainly have been occasioned by the jaundiced eye of ill health. My mother and I were agreeing the other day in

* *Youthful* is the word—*Milton's L'Allegro.*

this

this grateful truth, and looking with great pleasure as we were returning over Westminster bridge towards these trees and towers, where our lot is so happily fixed for the present. Indeed I know no way of life on the whole, which would so well suit my health and inclinations; the frequent interruptions make it not a life of much improvement, but alas indolence is now become necessary to me; and I sometimes wonder I did as much as I did, at a time when I was not myself aware of the state of health I was in, when I left Bristol, as I now by the happy comparison with my present situation. The same consideration must make me in a great degree overlook the ungrateful discontentedness, that made me look back with too much regret to the places we had left. I had enjoyed years of health in them, and retained the agreeable impression, while every thing here from sickness had appeared in a gloomy light: and thus for want of one blessing I overlooked many greater; but then it was no more faultily, than if, in a room richly furnished and hung with the finest pictures, one should neither see nor admire a single object, because the window that should let in sunshine upon them was barred up. And now that sunshine of health begins to gild them, how many delightful objects do I see with thankfulness! My two best friends—and such friends—blest with such active health and

cheerfulness! But I will not enumerate; it will not I hope be long before you come and partake my cheerfuller hours, as you have kindly borne with and assisted so many gloomy ones. I was willing however to make this retraction, both in justice, and because I thought it would please you. But what has been the matter with *your* spirits? I wish I could have an hour's conversation with you—or that by another wish I could convey you to the bottom of a Newcastle coal-pit, and send Mrs. Montagu to fetch you out. I dare say your friends' ailments, which you mention, have done you twice the harm they have done them. 'Tis just come into my head, that I verily believe the degree of feeling for others which I certainly want, you have most undoubtedly stolen from me. Do let me have it back again, for too much is too much, be it of what it will—and too little of some things is still worse; so pray return the stolen goods, or I will have you before Mrs. Fielding; *Mrs.* I say, for in points of delicacy and feeling she would certainly make the best justice.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 30, 1760.

I WAKE as if it were out of a dream (the bewitching despicable dream of indolence) to ask my kind friend what has become of us both for this long while, and whether she writ to *me* last, or I to *her?* So far I remember; her last Letter was very short, and *because* it was so I have some notion I mended the fire with it, but I dare say we remember one another daily, (I am sure I do *you*;) we seem somehow to have left one another off. To put an end therefore to this false appearance, I will write at once for fear, by to-morrow, I may relapse again into indolence. My detestation of writing has been like the antipathy one sometimes takes in illness to any wholesome sort of food, that one used to be fond of. I remember two years ago I could as easily have eat an Elephant as a sea biscuit, which I now *crump* again very comfortably, and for some weeks past I could as easily have writ a folio, as a common Letter of thanks, for chine and turkey, or a common message card to a how do you do; one of these compositions has sometimes

times taken me up two hours, and been as it seemed to me scarce English at last. This is surely a disease not yet mentioned by the writers on medicine, and I have therefore prescribed for myself some bark, and, ridiculous as it may sound, I already write infinitely better for it. This would perhaps be an admirable hint for dull authors; I think I will advertise that I have a nostrum for ——no, after all, I will not, for *dull* authors do little harm, and pert and mischievous ones are incurable.

'Tis now time to give you the good wishes of the season. Most heartily I do! may you abundantly enjoy, and be *fully* sensible of *all* its blessings! The *full* import of them none but perfected spirits can know, nor even they perfectly comprehend, for, if they could, their comprehension must be infinite; but the meanest may know enough, to raise faith into adoration, and that into joy unutterable and endless, provided its foundation be laid deep in humility—yet alas! how many poor human creatures consider Christmas day as nothing higher than the æra of minced pyes! I have been reading a treatise on humility written by Mr. Norris, and lent to me by Dr. Monsey; which I will keep till you come up, because I think it will strike and please you, as much as it did me.

I met *Cha.* the other day—guess where—at Lady

Lady Robert's. I was discrete enough not to enquire when she had heard from you, though I wished to have heard *of* you, but I thought you would wish me not; she looked mighty well, and, since we met by accident, I rather wished the coach had not called for me, as it did in three minutes.

Poor Lady Hardwicke has been confined by an arm and hand burnt by means of her ruffle; she is getting better, and it is delightful to see how charmingly she supports her spirits, and passes over many lonely hours that must be embittered by remembrances of our lost angel*, if *they* were not softened by resignation. Lady Margaret is not yet in town, but will I hope come early the new year. May it be a happy one to all! And especially to one of the honestest, and rightest hearts that ever beat upon a throne. Fine changes since last year, dining in public, and not going to bed till twelve; I am afraid this last year has not been so moral or rational as it ought. I am sure our Sovereign sets us a better example, who rises at six and goes to bed at eleven.

How I long for your arrival, and feel quite happy in thinking it will not now be many days before we shall meet; God send you a safe and pleasant journey.

* Lady Anson.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *May* 23, 1761.

You have had a fine travelling day, dear Miss Carter: I enjoyed it for you in a quiet solitary silent airing of near two hours this morning; but my pleasure was sadly damped by the thought that you was travelling with a heavy heart. My mother said you made very good promises,—let *her* words have weight with you, though those of such a hard-hearted unfeeling creature as I am have none. Suffering as much as ever one can, be it ever so silently, and ever so patiently, is *not* resignation, for it is counteracting his will "*who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*"—and who therefore would have every wound, which for our good he is obliged to inflict, not probed in the most painful, but healed in the most gentle way possible.—— Therefore when you are personally in Kent, let your *thoughts and remembrances* dwell there as little as possible, but send *them* towards this part of the world, where they may be so employed as to give some relief to your spirits. Indeed this is but common

common justice, for you well know how much your *thoughts* wandered from us when you was *personally* here. And when you think of us, pray let my cold be off your spirits, though in some degree it must still be on your conscience, for when you stole away so like a thief, I am fully convinced you most feloniously packed up the said cold, for I have not seen nor heard any thing of it since. To day has been a fatiguing day, Miss Gilbert at breakfast very thin, but very happy, in very good spirits, and very agreeable. Then my said solitary airing, and well timed was this interval of silence, for I found by my fire side Dr. Monsey and Emin; the last staid till half past eight; to them came a number of friends, amongst whom Lady Grey, who spoke very kindly to our hero, and brought me the very beautiful print of her two daughters. They all dined, a party of seventeen. I made my escape early as I saw our Asiatic had much to say—his wild history was very interesting, and much in character; but to comprehend it I must have a whole day, and by that time he will have talked my head as romantic as his own. I wish with all my heart you had been here, but as you would not stay a week to collect his history from himself, you don't deserve to have it repeated to you. He has not taken the room over your's, because the people would not insure him against bugs, the only wild beast

beast he is afraid of. Indeed were they as hospitable as Oriental bugs, he would not fear even them, for he says they never bite any but strangers, for that when they have used to find any person in possession of the same bed three or four nights, they walk over his face without waking him for the future.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *May* 30, 1761.

You were very good, my dear Miss Talbot, in so soon giving me the pleasure of hearing such a prosperous account of you. I absolutely deny the stealing of your cold; I brought none away but my own, which has since eloped, not that I think a cold more or less of any consequence to such adamantine lungs as mine: so whenever you have one to dispose of, pack it up and send it to me. A howling N. E. wind renders the weather so sullen and uncomfortable here, that I have no heart to walk: indeed till to-day there has been such a mixture of rain, and thunder, and lightning with it, that there was no attempting an excursion,

excursion, unless one had sallied out on a broomstick. The zephirs, it is to be hoped, will soon return, and restore the smiles of summer, and the song of nightingales.

I hope by this time you have unravelled the intricacy of Emin's story, and that he has talked your head sufficiently romantic: a capacity of head which I am extremely inclined to envy. I am glad to hear that Miss Gilbert is so very happy and in such good spirits. After all, if Mr. Ward * is "jovial and crank," why should Miss Gilbert be "dumpish and demure?" Seriously: I wish she may meet with more reasonable people in what are said to be her present prospects, than in the last. If Lord E—— † does not understand music, it is to be hoped, for both their sakes, that he will put himself to school to the Tritons.

To make you amends for all the nonsense which I have collected from all the frippery shelves throughout Westminster and London, I will mention a book which, if you have not read, it is fit you should, "La Mort d'Abel." It is a High Dutch poem translated into French prose. This

* The late Lord Dudley, between whom and Miss Gilbert, daughter to the Archbishop of York, there had been a strong attachment, which prudential motives had prevented from ending in marriage.

† Edgecombe, who married her about two months after.

general account of it, does not, I confess, look very promising, but I think you will be pleased with the book. I believe it may not by any means be conformable to the rules of Epic poetry, but the manner and the sentiments are charming; and to me it was extremely affecting. There are two pastorals in the same volume, by the same author, which pleased me better than almost any thing I have met with of that kind.

We talk mightily of invasions here, and some people of extraordinary good eyes, one day or night, thought they actually discovered the flat-bottomed boats: but I heard nothing of the vision till after it was confuted. Indeed I hope the whole report is without foundation, for Lady Brett drank tea with us yesterday, and I do not find that Sir Percy, who is the commanding officer here, has had any particular intelligence about the said boats: so probably they are reposing in quiet on dry land: and there may they quietly remain!

I suppose you are by this time engaged in reading Dr. Hawkesworth's Oriental Tale, which I am persuaded must have merit because it is his. I quietly suspend my curiosity till the book happens to fall in my way: which is no great instance of self-denial, as I always find more good authors than I have time to read on my own little shelves: and one is seldom under any great necessity for a new book,

book, except in London, where every body is talking of them.

MISS TALBOT TO MRS. CARTER.

Lambeth, *June* 9, 1761.

How good-humoured it was of the weather to change so prettily just for the King's birthday! A fair, cool, mild, cheerful-looking day was just what one wished for. The crowd was without example both at noon and night. I am told that at the ball there was much difficulty in making room even for the King himself, and at noon many of the Royal Family were forced to wait an hour in the street. The finery was prodigious; but, as my mother observes, when one has said gold, silver, and diamonds, one has said all that the subject affords. My own share in the gaieties of the day was painting flowers all the morning, appointing a dance for our folks below stairs, looking in upon them for five minutes, and afterwards watching the blaze

blaze of bonfires and the starry rain of rockets from the gallery windows.

The next remarkable of the week was the transit of Venus, to which the day was remarkably favourable. Having no better help than a bit of smoked glass, two or three minutes blinded me sufficiently, nor did I envy Mr. Ford, who had watched it from four o'clock from the roof of his house; however, he came at noon, and insulted me extremely. He made me amends by chusing two *gowns* for me, I assure you! Your pretty butter-cup yellow for a night-gown, and a pretty checked blue and white for a negligée, and they are actually at the mantua-maker's; so that grand point is at last decided, which gives me hopes that in time the Augsburg preliminaries may be settled too.

I have never seen Mrs. Montagu since you went; however, I have heard of her from Emin and Dr. Monsey, who speak well of her looks, and also of her wisdom, for she kept out of the birth-day crowd. By the help of these two worthies I supplied Mrs. Mackenzie with gallery tickets for the ball. Did you ever chance to see Orinda's Letters? They are rather stiff, but seem to have an air of genuineness—and were not printed for Curl, but Lintot. Tell me any thing you recollect of Mrs. Catherine Phillips. I have a notion that for a romantic wo-

man

man she was a good woman. But my dear Mr. Hanway * has published two volumes at last, which you saw, and only told me you had seen them, but for which I love and honour him (and so far as spending thirty hours upon them I believe I shall also *obey* him) as much as the worlds, and the wits, and the critics will, I suppose, despise him. Indeed *that is* a good man. Not that I would have licensed *every* word in his book neither, but the whole delights me.

Emin is happy in having been introduced to Lord Bath. Will you take a trip with him into Russia if he should chance to go that way this year? He is admirable this year. I wish you had staid to have seen more of him.

* It does not appear what work of this benevolent and excellent man is alluded to. His Travels were published in 1753, and his "Journey from Portsmouth" in 1757, if the Biographical Dictionary is correct. The Editor has no opportunity of referring to the separate Memoirs of his Life.

MRS. CARTER TO MISS TALBOT.

Deal, *June* 13, 1761.

I AM glad you were so prettily entertained on the birth-day. We had squibs and rockets, bonfires and sociables, and music parties here too, which I meant to have shared in, but found the task too much for me, so quietly slunk to my pillow.

It was well for you astronomers in London and Lambeth that the day was less cloudy on the 6th than it was with us, for the sun never once shewed his face till Venus had finished her journey over him, and we concluded that the honour of seeing this fine phenomenon was still reserved entire to Mr. Horrox and his friend Mr. Crabtree, but it seems you and Mr. Ford have robbed them of this exclusive privilege.

I find by the news, that Mrs. Talbot was mistaken in reducing all the finery of the birth-day to gold, silver, and diamonds, as some of the gentlemen—pretty creatures! were trimmed with point and blond lace. Pray had any of the ladies swords and bag wigs?

I never

I never had the least doubt but Mrs. Phillip's * Letters to Sir Charles Cotterel were genuine; it is so long since I met with them that I remember very little what they were. All that I recollect of her poetry is, that it is very moral and sentimental; and all that I know of herself is, that her genius and character are mentioned with the highest respect, admiration, and reverence by the writers of that time. I believe her Poems are very scarce; I have two or three little pieces in a miscellany, which if you have any curiosity to see I will send you. I never saw Mr. Hanway's two volumes but in an advertisement, nor do I know what they are about, but am glad they have afforded you an agreeable amusement.

We have been in some bustle here since I writ last. Sir P. Brett is gone on board of ship, the Captains are ordered not to lie on shore, and Lady Brett is gone from here pretty suddenly. It is certain the French have drawn soldiers together at Boulogne, &c. but the wise people seem to think it is rather from an apprehension about their own coast than any design of invading our's; however, it is perfectly right to watch their motions.

* Mrs. Carter's account of this Lady is so correct as to need but little addition. She died in 1664, and her Poems, &c. were published in 1667. Biog. Dict.

I have just now received a parcel of Sermons, which I imagine his Grace would have me disperse. I wish they may be of use, but if either preaching or example in this particular could have influenced the people of this place, they have not wanted either. It is strange Mr. Franklyn should have said nothing to the purchasers of things gotten by this wicked rapine. They seem to be at least equally guilty with the first robbers; perhaps more so, if one considers that the last have often the temptation of extreme poverty, and the others most commonly have not *.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *July* 2, 1761.

Am I a Letter in your debt, or not? At all events I will write, because I long to hear from you. Mrs. Montagu has been out of town

* This seems to allude to the wicked practice, but too prevalent on every coast, of plundering wrecked vessels, which would soon cease if no purchaser for the plunder could be found.

these

these ten days; I am undone to see her; I want to talk much with her about Emin. Indeed his spirit is a noble one, but that noble spirit is at present much depressed—Emin was not born for a state of dependance and suspence—but it is a useful trial for him. He has an ague besides, but *that* the bark which he takes will remove. I wish there was any such medicine for the agues of the mind, those hot and cold fits of friendship which fret a generous heart which is held in suspence. I ask him if he does not see the hand of Providence in his return to England, since it was against his inclination, his judgment, and his resolution. I believe though, he has *really* acted *judiciously* in coming back, and I trust the event will prove it. Mr. Montagu's friendship is steady, and on that I have great dependance for his success.

Poor Lady Hardwicke is very ill. The last time I saw her she enquired much after you, and wished you in town for the sake of poor Lady Frances Williams, who feels her great loss very deeply. Alas! how many persons one has to grieve for. I went to town last night to meet, as I hoped, a cheerful party at Lady Grey's, and pick up some good news, or at least some amusing chit chat; instead of which we heard of Lady Hardwicke's illness, and another that sent me home very heavy hearted—poor Mr. Richardson was seized on Sun-

day evening with a most severe paralytic stroke*. How many good hearts will be afflicted by this, in many more countries than England? To how many will he be an inexpressible loss! But to consider him at present as lost to himself, and perhaps with some sense of that loss, is most grievous! It sits pleasantly upon my mind, that the last morning we spent together was particularly friendly, and quiet, and comfortable. It was the 28th of May —he looked then so well! One has long apprehended some stroke of this kind; the disease made its gradual approaches by that heaviness which clouded the cheerfulness of his conversation, that used to be so lively and so instructive; by the encreased tremblings which unfitted that hand so peculiarly formed to guide the pen; and by, perhaps, the querulousness of temper, most certainly not natural to so sweet and so enlarged a mind, which you and I have lately lamented, as making his family at times not so comfortable as his principles, his study, and his delight to diffuse happiness wherever he could, would otherwise have done. Well, his noble spirit will soon now, I suppose, be freed from its corporeal incumbrance—it were a sin to wish against it, and yet how few such will be left behind! I will not conclude a Letter

* He died two days after the date of this Letter.

to

to you with such ideas of melancholy. Imagine us here, for it is really truth, all in health, and as cheerful and happy as in such a world one can be. As it is a *duty* to feel for the sorrows of all, so it is equally one to enjoy with *cheerful* thanfulness one's own blessings. The rest of this day I devote to friendship and joy, after I have sent to enquire after our suffering friends. Take care of yourself, and be as well as you can and as happy as you ought.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 1, 1761.

I HAVE intended writing to you for some time, my dear Miss Carter, but have never found time. But then you must consider this is such a year as never revolved before, and all sort of good, surprising, and unusual things may be expected in it. I must consider it as for your good, that I have not for a moment drawn your attention from the delights of Tunbridge. In such a set as I imagine you engaged, and in this very fine weather, and not a particularly crowded season, (and without such a dead weight, alas, as I was upon your cheerful-

cheerfulness at Bristol,) it must be, in spite of all stoicism, delightful. I remember I thought it particularly so, from the prettiness of the place, and the company of some excellent friends, when I was about fourteen, and why one should not be always fourteen in point of spirits I cannot at this instant imagine. Comparing this declaration with the woful spirits in which you have too often seen me, you will wonder—but have I not already warned you not to wonder at any thing that is good and right in the reign of George the Third, and in the victorious year 1761? I used, you know, to pine for the country—nous avons changés tout cela, and I cannot imagine this summer how people can exist so far out of the world as Tunbridge. There is something so charmingly alive at this time in the environs of London—no—a chaise and one (which you know is five times as irresistible to me as a coach and six) could not drag me two miles further off than I am. Besides, here we have the joy of town and country united. To sit, as I did the other morning, on a shady seat, with sweet air, gay sunshine, and an infinity of roses, jessamin, and carnations around me, and hear the guns from the Park and Tower *, with a thousand echoes from the

* Probably for the capture of Belleisle, which took place in the month of June preceding.

water,

water, and innumerable sets of bells proclaiming our astonishing victory, while you, poor Ladies, were fainting and dying at the thoughts of a Spanish invasion! Then to return to an admirable concert and join in the chorus, as I actually did, of all sorts of loyal and triumphant songs! Is there any thing at Tunbridge—much less among the bramble-bushes of the wild country, half so pretty? I do assure you it has been absolutely for want of time that I have not writ to you, for I had fifty clever things to say. But in the midst of this charming bustle, how can one find time to write to people that nobody knows? Poor Miss Carter! or rather, admirable Tunbridge! What constellations of wit and learning must be *usual* in that place; when such a partie quarrée as I fancied there is totally overlooked! A fine laced man drank tea with us two days ago, who was just arrived from the Pantiles —so your walk was called in my days, I know not its name now. We were very eager to enquire after Tunbridge news, and as I well hoped, that before this time my friends would have distinguished themselves enough some way or other to find a place in half a dozen lampoons, (a civiler hope than that of their making a part of the lulling composition of panegyrics,) I expected every moment to hear them named; but as he wanted a good deal of prompting, we asked at last what

ladies

ladies of distinction were there? The poor man began to rub his forehead to recollect dancers and beauties; but as we shewed little anxiety about pretty misses, he began his list with Lady Abercorn—and some mortification I had to find that the Earl of Bath and Lady Abercorn were inseparable; the third of their party was Lady Westmorland, and the fourth he knew not who.—Well, Sir, but what other Ladies—what other Lords? How does Lord Lyttelton dispose of himself there?—Oh, why Lord Lyttelton, Lord Lyttelton does not play much.—Well, who are his conversation parties then? Why, generally Lady Abercorn. Are there no other ladies at Tunbridge any way remarkable? is there not *one* Mrs. Montagu?—Oh dear, yes; he had forgot indeed—and there was another Lady there, who was inseparable from Lady Mary Coke—but Lady Mary was gone, and that other Lady—he believed he had once had the pleasure of seeing her at the St. Paul's Deanery—a sad treacherous memory—he could not recollect her name—a Lady who had some time or other translated a book, the name of which he had also forgotten. See the short date of human illustricity! All this the Archbishop charged me to repeat to you; but could I represent the comic of this conversation as strongly as I felt it, you would feel as irresistible a desire to laugh as seized upon me. His

Grace

Grace condoles with you on your having so soon lost Lord Bath to Lady Abercorn.

I am ashamed to say I have not yet sent La Mort d'Abel to Mrs. Donnelan; but the truth is, I began reading it to my mother, and cannot find in my heart to send it away till I have done. It has taught us to be fond of a sweet flowery spot in the garden, which is our reading place, and we impatiently sigh for a quiet hour or two to finish it. Poor Mrs. Donnelan! I pity her, but she does not know her misfortune in this delay, for without reading the book there is no forming an idea of its excellence—unless she has heard a précis of it from Mrs. Montagu. I shall be loth to part with it till another is to be had. It is not faultless to be sure; but it seems to me absolutely one of the most charming and instructive things I ever read. I am undone to read it in the original. Can you direct me to any tolerable master of the German language? I wish it was one of poor Restiro's.

Adieu! I am going out in six minutes, and must in the mean while write an elaborate treatise upon coronets and silver petticoats. But make my best compliments along with my lame excuses to Mrs. Montagu, to whom I have ten thousand duties from her loyal subject Emin. He also sends his respects to the learned German Lady. He is well

well and happy, and I think much improved by the tour of Asia *.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Aug.* 6, 1761.

Such a Letter as arrived yesterday from Tunbridge, and enriched with such a Postscript, deserves the speediest answer; but indeed I find it was much easier writing to an illustrious friend who would take up with mere chit chat than to nymphs that are praised every day in all the elegance of every language. I protest I have a good mind to write to poor Lady Abercorn; my pen would go faster in abundance—Suppose I were to transcribe a little for her? But our Ladies are set out to fetch our future Queen, and a fair wind is absolutely necessary, so I will do no mischief.

You know too well (for I find through all that seven-fold shield of philosophy you *felt* it) how

* The answer to this Letter is printed in page 150 of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, quarto edition.

readily

readily we believed our laced intelligencer. I therefore write this Letter by express order, to retract all that was said in the first, to make our humblest submission to the two only Ladies that are seen, listened to, or talked of at Tunbridge; and by way of particular compensation for the malicious satisfaction a certain person expressed upon Lady Abercorn's admirer having forgot the names both of Epictetus and his translator, I am commissioned to tell her of a mortification which befel that person but yesterday, when looking over a catalogue of books he found his own volume of Sermons sunk in price from three, to two shillings. Upon this he hoped to comfort himself, by finding a proportionable diminution in the value of Epictetus; but, au contraire, he could not find that any one person who had once been possessed of a copy has ever parted with it. I suppose, indeed, you may have asked it as a particular boon of Minerva, that as you never *raised* a pye, your works should never help to *bake* one.

His Grace has given me two commissions for you, which he says he feels you will attend to with pleasure. The first is to look up Mrs. Secker, who is to arrive at Tunbridge next Thursday, and make acquaintance with her. She is a mild amiable woman; her name was Tombes, and she is wife to that clever agreeable Mr. Secker that is the Lord

Lord Steward's right hand in all his very laudable reformations. Though Tunbridge is necessary for her health, she goes almost broken-hearted at being forced to be so long from her two dear little girls. Pray comfort her all you can. I am sure you will like her. The other is to request you will send, as soon as possible, five guineas to Mr. Jones *, which his Grace will repay with thanks when we meet.

I have been at Hackney this morning, calling on poor Mr. Benson; he is rather better, but very low; it gave me inexpressible pleasure to see how his fallen countenance brightened up after half an hour's chat. Miss Douglass is quite well; the more I see of her, the more I learn to love and value her uncommon kind of character. There is with all that lively rattle, a truth, integrity, and right turn of mind that is charming. I wish she were to have some quiet little place about our new Queen, for she would be harmless, and unhurt even in a court. Her sister is at last going abroad, and has shewn me a Letter from her husband † that makes me doubly rejoice at his success. It was very affecting for her to receive, as it was directed

* Then Curate to Dr. Carter at Woodchurch, and in distressed circumstances. His Grace repeated this donation.

† Capt. Mackenie, of the Royal Navy.

to

to her poor mother, but it expressed in an honest blunt way, that one was sure came from the heart, the affection of a real son and brother. It was to desire that she would tell his wife that he had been one of the three who took the last rich prize, and his share comes to above £5000. There was also exprest in a short sincere way the highest thankfulness to and trust in Providence. We have lately seen the Durandas all well.

May Tunbridge perform as great wonders *this* year as Bristol in 1759. I hear much good of Mrs. Montagu, and rejoice at it, as who that knows her but must! But Dr. Monsey suspects that *you* drink rather too hard. Pray feel your way very gently and gradually, but if the waters mend your spirits, and remove your feverettes without encreasing your head-aches at all—then drink on as *deep* as if it was the *Pierian stream.* I have no Tunbridge waters to revive me, and though I am well and in good *sober spirits,* I have no such flow as will furnish out a tolerable Letter to Mrs. Montagu's Post-script; therefore do say to her in your own words how much and how truly I am obliged to her, and how highly I was entertained by the lines she sent me.

We shall expect you in town very soon, for I take it for granted the Muses will depute you to walk as their proxy at the coronation, as they must

then be at Oxford and Cambridge, writing verses on the wedding. Adieu! All happiness attend you*.

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Sept.* 26, 1761.

Mrs. Montagu has explained to me this morning, what I suspected indeed, and what I hoped from some hints in your Tunbridge Letters; but I want to know the particulars from yourself. What size is the volume intended? What additions will there be to the manuscripts I have seen? And how is one to get a sight of the dedication†? I want to know all this and every thing you can tell me, before I make the consultation Mrs. Montagu tells me you are anxious should be made. But when I have your answer I will not put it into my *considering* drawer, "from whose *bourne* few ma-

* The answer to this Letter is likewise printed in Mrs. Carter's Memoirs page 155, quarto edition.

† Alluding to the intended publication of Mrs. Carter's Poems.

nuscripts

nuscripts return," but send you some sort of reply within a week or ten days.

I ought to have written to you some time ago, but the tumult of the world has not permitted it. Indeed when I received your last Letter from Tunbridge it came in quieter times, and I delayed answering it awhile, because it was so full of historical erudition, and that part of the English history you referred to was so totally out of my head, that I thought till I had read ov r s me few folios in the library I was no fit Cor es;ondent for a lady so zealous in the politics of our forefathers.—But before I had even looked into the catalogue for the proper book to begin with, the tumult of the world broke in upon me, and though I had ten thousand things to say to you, yet have I never found time till to-day.

First I must congratulate you on being got home, because, agreeable and delightful as Tunbridge has been, I know you feel glad to be there; and I hope your trip has supplied you with spirits, and its conversations and pleasing scenes with a variety of cheerful ideas, that will make every thing around you feel the charms of your mended health. Rejoice, I beg of you, that you are far removed from the coronation. But, alas, poor Miss Carter! what joy can any thing give you if it be true, as I really suspect, that your persecutor, Lady Abercorn,

corn, lives with her son at Witham; for then consider that after being the sole object of all eyes, and engrosser of all admiration at Tunbridge, she only went from thence to prove to the world, that not only Lord Lyttelton could converse, and Lord Bath make his parties with none but her ladyship—but even the Princess, whom so many thousands had been expecting for a fortnight at Greenwich *, could find no one fit to honor with her first visit in England but Lady Abercorn. You may talk of your Apollos and Minervas as long as you please, but after this, never let me contend again with the friends of honest Eolus and Boreas.

Every thing that can be heard of our amiable Queen, I dare say you hear from Mrs. Montagu. Agreeable in her person, engaging in her manners, admirable in her temper, sweetness, cheerfulness, and self-command. Her behaviour during the voyage was all one could wish it to be. Two or three days before the coronation the Archbishop was far from well. I thank God, on that he was in perfect health. You will judge of our anxiety about him all that day. I am glad I was not at the

* It was originally designed that her Majesty should land at Greenwich, and preparations were made accordingly; but the bad weather obliged her to disembark at Harwich on the 7th of September, from whence she proceeded to Lord Abercorn's at Witham.

Abbey

Abbey—I really do not think my spirits would have supported the delight. As for the tinsel of the show (though the finest that gold, silver, jewels, graceful figure, and beauty could exhibit) I value it not—but the solemnity of the service, the noble harmony—and above all, such a King! Your better informed correspondents will send you all the particulars; but by every account his manner and behaviour through the whole day, and most especially in the Abbey, was superior to any thing the strongest imagination could form or the warmest heart desire. I beseech you let us all be as good as we can, and make all around us so, that this country may in some degree deserve the long continuance of so inestimable a blessing.

Pray pity my poor mother, or rather judge of her felicity, who dined yesterday at the Dutch Ambassador's; we were eighteen at a table, and not a word but French or Dutch spoken; however, the scene was amusing, and I think did her good, as did the visits of Dr. Monsey and Mrs. Montagu this morning. Emin embarks to-morrow for Russia. My best wishes go with him; indeed he deserves them. That he may be welcome there I have writ word to Dr. Dumaresque how much your health is improved by your excursion to Tunbridge. I am sure you will have felt for me this last week

—Lady Hardwicke was a sad loss to me *, and a very affecting one. I am really very well, and very thankful that I am so, but how I have got through this last fortnight I do not comprehend. My head and heart have been more, and more variously engaged and agitated than I believe happens to some heads and hearts in a dozen years. The scenes of sorrow—of bustle—of splendour—the variety of quick shifting ideas, would take a ream of royal paper to describe—so I will not add another word.

Mrs. CARTER to Miss TALBOT.

Deal, *Sept.* 26, 1761.

As I am of too little importance to be engaged in the tumult of the world, and as your Letter does not contain any such historical difficulty as requires the reading of several folios before it can be understood, there is no sufficient reason

* Who died only a few days before.

why

why I should wait five or six weeks before I thank you for it.

If you had any terrors about the coronation, I congratulate you on their being so happily over. Never I suppose was so little mischief done upon such an occasion, for I think one has not heard of a single person being hurt in any considerable degree. At this distance I had probably more fears than you, who knew how very well every thing would be conducted: however in spite of my fears and your congratulations at my being out of the bustle, I should have been very glad to have been in the midst of it: and I thought myself very good in being contented, instead of being rejoiced at not being there. To any one who knew the state of my health before I went to Tunbridge, this gallant inclination is a sufficient proof of its amendment. I thank God, I have not been as well for years.

The ladies of Lapland have such an incontestible interest with Eolus and Boreas, that there is no manner of wonder that a certain great personage should be blown to Witham. However, in spite of all your most malicious insinuations, my Lord Bath is not blown thither yet, and I hope never will, for he would sit very awkwardly upon a broomstick, if ever her ladyship should attempt to take him en croupe. My Lord Lyttelton is to be sure more agile, so whether he might not make a

tolerable figure on such a poney I cannot tell. I am very glad to hear that Emin is set out under such advantageous circumstances, and very heartily wish him success in every right undertaking. I was really disappointed and vexed at his leaving Tunbridge so suddenly, for I should have been glad to have heard an hundred particulars of his last expedition.

I have seen an article in the newspaper which I am particularly sorry for as it will affect you—I imagine you have heard of the melancholy situation of a very excellent friend of mine by the death of Mr. Chapone; never I believe did such a shock as this happen to an affection more strong and tender than her's: yet she submits to it with the most perfect resignation, and such a degree of composure, as nothing but such principles as those by which she is governed have power to bestow. Miss Burrows is with Mrs. Chapone, which I am very glad of, as her company will be one of the greatest human consolations she can have.

I hope the Archbishop was not hurt by the fatigue of the coronation day. We had great illuminations, and firing of canon here. There happened to be nineteen men of war in the Downs besides sloops: and 21 guns from each made a noble peal of thunder.

I am really very ill qualified, my dear friend,

to

to give you any exact account of a scheme which I always drive as fast as possible out of my head, because I never think of it without a very painful degree of confusion; however I will answer your questions as well as I am able.

First in regard to the size of the volume: I apprehend it may make a pamphlet of—what *value* the readers may guess, but about the *price* of one shilling, or eighteen-pence at farthest. Next as to additions to the manuscripts you have seen, there will be absolutely none. I never I believe writ any thing but what you have seen; and I am very incapable of writing any thing now. Indeed if I was not, I have no idea of sitting down and writing verses merely by way of putting them into a book*.

Indeed I am neither so stupid nor so ingrateful as to be insensible to the honor which is done me on this occasion: but I find all the encouragement that has been given me too weak to overcome my own diffidence and reluctance. However I have promised Mrs. Montagu that if this scheme is not disapproved of either by my father or my friends at Lambeth, that I will give up my own scruples. If after you have been so good as to mention it to

* Then follows what is printed page 160, of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, quarto edition.

his

his Grace, no objection come from you, I will write to Mr. Rivington that he may speak to Mrs. Richardson about printing them directly.

I cannot help telling you that there is something particularly obliging in Lord Bath's manner of proposing this publication. I am very sensible that I am indebted for every instance of his regard for me, to his consideration for Mrs. Montagu, but indeed I do upon a general account heartily esteem and love him. His great politeness, his sensibility, his constant cheerfulness, and the many instances one hears of his kind, and generous, and friendly disposition, render him a very amiable character; and I feel a pleasure in repeating all this to you, though I should be as far from putting it into a dedication, as he from suffering me to do it.

The things which are supposed to be writ by every Correspondent one is usually pretty sure of hearing from none. So that I have heard no particulars about the behaviour of the King, but a few which Harry, who knew my extreme veneration for him, has collected to rejoice my heart, and which I make no doubt from your general description are true. I rejoice to hear you have so well got through all your agitations, I suppose you keep the particulars till we meet in town, which I hope will be this winter, unless I run my head into the hole of a rock to avoid the din of my own jingling.

Miss

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Oct.* 19, 1761.

* I know so much of Mrs. Chapone both from you and poor Mr. Richardson, that I have felt her affliction most sincerely—but we had better by half live without feeling, like the folks of this world. I was meditating yesterday upon death, till I felt myself amazed how one could ever think of conversing on any other subject—and yet 'tis almost the only subject that is never treated of in conversation farther than as a mere uninteresting fact. Were any number of persons intended to embark for a distant unknown country, of whom *some* might be called upon to-morrow, and *all* must be called thither soon, would they not whenever they met as friends and fellow travellers be enquiring amongst themselves how each was provided for the journey; what accounts each had heard of the place; the terms of reception; what passports; what recommendations; what interest

* The beginning of this Letter is printed in page 158 of Mrs. Carter's Memoirs, 4to. edition.

and hopes each had secured; what treasures remitted; what protection insured; and excite each other to dispatch what yet was possible to be done, and might to-morrow be irretrievably too late?—Methinks it would sit pleasingly on the mind, when a friend was vanished out of this visible world to have such conversations to reflect on!—What astonishing scenes are now opened to the minds of many with whom a few months ago we used familiarly, and triflingly to converse? With whom we have wasted many an inestimable hour! What clear views have they *now* of those great and important truths, for which the foolish bustle of this world, leaves scarce any place in the immortal mind!

I am interrupted*. You cannot love and honour our good King and Queen too much. And they are as happy as good. Emin is arrived at Elsinore, and embarked thence for Riga on the 26th, he has charged me with many duties for Mrs. Montagu and Lord Bath.

* Is it possible to read this Letter and not grieve for the interruption?

Miss TALBOT to Mrs. CARTER.

Lambeth, *Dec.* 3, 1761.

I write with great thankfulness, by being enabled, thank God, to say that his Grace is again quite comfortable, and we hope the fit is quite gone off; he looks thin and poorly, but the gravel is a most lowering complaint, and we have all suffered for his sufferings. My mother is surprizingly well, considering the anxiety she has gone through, and I am very well: our friends are all very kind, and as for our medical people I know not which I love best, they have all been so attentive and friendly. I showed my Lord your good advice. Also Lord Lyttelton's good verses which I return with thanks. He desires Sappho may be spelt as it ought with a double *p*—And I desire *Chantresse divine* that you will resume the lyre farther than by transcribing; that is, add to your collection two or three translations, which on receipt of this you must sit down instantly and write. One or two of the Eurillas, and one or two of the five sonnets. Carlo Maggi deserves to be introduced by *you*, and in *such* a collection, and *so* prefaced.

I honour the friendship between Mrs. Montagu and Lady P.*, a friendship began when one party is so near leaving this world, looks far beyond it—And no friendship is worth the name that does not. Perhaps their acquaintance may be of longer date than I imagine, but I trust it will be of very long continuance. I believe Lady P. to be a very good woman, and have for many years respected her highly. I know no one who has educated so many daughters so excellently well, and Lady Sophia has shared the happiness of the same education, I hope, long enough to have received from it every essential advantage. I find Lady P. sees nobody but her own family and Mrs. Montagu, else I should exceedingly long to be admitted. A fellow exile just on the point of being recalled, and sensible of the blessing, is of all companies the most interesting. I neither knew she was ill nor in town till your Letter told it.

I do not wish to see Mrs. Montagu just at present. I fear we should not agree about Fingal, which I have just got to-day. She says it is better than Homer—*I* fancy it is not to be named in a day—no not in a century with Abel—which is

* Probably Lady Pomfret, who died Dec. 17, 1762. Two of her excellent daughters still survive; Lady Charlotte Finch and Lady Louisa Clayton.

also

also translating prettily, and partly printed. Miss Douglass was here to-day looking well and pretty, her sister is still at Portsmouth. My mother is much your's, and longing for your book to be read and forgot by the middle of January, by which time she will have nice posies growing up for you.

END OF VOL. II.

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